

[31st January 1934]

[Note.—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

NON-OFFICIAL BUSINESS.

II.—RESOLUTION ON A MATTER OF GENERAL PUBLIC INTEREST— REMISSION IN THE EXISTING RATE OF ASSESSMENT ON RYOT- WARI LANDS IN THE PRESIDENCY.

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"The discussion on the Land Revenue Remission resolution will now be resumed."

* Mr. V. M. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR:—"Mr. President, Sir, I rise in my seat to intervene in this debate for more than one reason. In the first place, previous speakers coming from various districts of this Province have joined hands in ventilating individual grievances of their particular districts along with the general representations that they have made. It is needless for me to say that the agriculturists of this Province have made out an unanswerable case. The unanimity and depth of expression of opinion both on the floor of the House as well as outside it, and the arguments and figures that have been adduced, have placed the case of the landholders in an unassailable position. But a far more convincing argument which is more eloquent than any other argument has been placed by my hon. Friends Mr. Langley on the one hand and Mr. Daniel Thomas on the other. Sir, it is needless for me to say that facts are more convincing than arguments and in a humble way I would appeal to the Government to take a dozen cases of landholders in any part of this Province and investigate their true economic position. I will indeed be surprised and in fact the House will indeed be surprised if any landholder or any agriculturist can claim that his occupation has paid him any profitable return at any time whatsoever.

"Sir, I would also like to advert to one or two arguments that have been placed for the consideration of this House. My hon. Friend, Mr. Basu Dev, said: 'What does it matter if a pittance of relief of 25 per cent is given to the small landlords.' Sir, I do not know whether he realizes that to a small landholder even a couple of annas would go a long way towards his family budget. If a landlord who pays a kist of Rs. 10 can be relieved to the extent of Rs. 2-8-0, I may assure my hon. Friend, it would be a great relief. In fact my opinion is that more relief should be given to this class of people than is contemplated in the resolution. Sir, it is one of the points indirectly though satirically suggested by the gallant knight from Ganjam when he made a proposal that landholders paying less than Rs. 10 as tax should be exempted from such payment. I do not think, Sir, that the suggestion he made is so harebrained as some people make it out to be. In the very Government communiqué issued on the subject of land revenue remission, a distinction is sought to be made between cultivating landlords and non-cultivating landlords. Whatever may be the position of the Rs. 10 pattadars in individual cases, I daresay most of them are cultivating landlords and it is their case that deserves the strongest support from this House and from the Government.

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“ Sir, I do not grudge relief to the richer landlords; but it is these Rs. 10 pattadars who form, about 70 per cent of the landholders that stand in need of urgent relief in a larger measure. I know, Sir, that the finances of this Government will be sorely taxed by such a proposal. Well, I do not therefore plead for the complete wiping off of the taxes due from this class of people at present. But I am sure, even for that, the time will certainly come and the sooner the question is tackled the better.

“ Sir, two years ago, several Members of this House, from their experience and from their intimate contact with the population of this Province seriously warned the Government of the said plight of the agriculturists. The Government, or at least the hon. the Finance Members then took up an attitude of plight and optimism and withdrew the several measures of retrenchment, especially the cut in the salaries of Government servants. Sir, it seems to me that the attitude that he took up was the attitude of the snake-charmer toying with the snake of finance. He plays with it and then gets bitten. Sir, I do not know what the snake-charmer—the Finance Member has got in his sleeve to effect a cure for the financial condition of the agriculturists.

“ There is one other point on which I would like to say a word, and that is that any relief given to the agriculturist must be quick and immediate. If, on the other hand as suggested, this relief is to await a decision of a committee that may be appointed to set on foot an enquiry for the solution of the larger agricultural problems, such belated relief will be absolutely of no avail to the landlords. Such belated relief, let me impress upon the Government, would do good to nobody. The ryots are in such a bad condition to-day. Sir, if no relief is vouchsafed to them at the present time, they would be irretrievably lost. They would be tied hand and foot and delivered over into the hands of the money-lenders. Their morale will be so much crushed that they will become mere serfs. From that position it will be impossible to retrieve them later.

“ Sir, much has been said about the role which the agriculturists play in the Government of countries. India is no exception. The agricultural population has always been the backbone of Government and stands for all that makes for stable Government. He is the unit of the home and the home is the unit of the nation. While we talk so eloquently of the utility of the agriculturists to the Government of the country, what is the attitude that you take towards them? Sir, the hon. Member, Mr. Langley, in the course of his remarks, spoke a word or two about certain steps, the Madras Government propose to take to improve the lot of the agriculturists. Sir, he especially pleaded for a changeover from one mode of cultivation to the other. He urged that it is the conservatism of the agriculturists that is in a large measure responsible for not changing over from paddy cultivation to sugarcane. Sir, may I remind him and also the Madras Government that that is not the only reason why a changeover is not possible. I am speaking with

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some experience in this matter and from the experience that I have derived from a discussion with the ryots of the district with which I am in a manner connected. Sir, I may at once say that the chief reason why a changeover from one crop to another is not possible is not only the conservatism of the agriculturists which no doubt exists, but the fact that they have no capital money to invest to initiate the changeover. It is the duty of the Government, if it is really serious, to find the necessary initial capital for the agriculturist to set himself up. I may also inform Mr. Langley and the Government of Madras that a mere changeover is only a palliative and that unless something more radical is done in the method of production and distribution by socializing them, this problem could never be really solved. Let us for one moment imagine that our Province will become one of the foremost provinces in sugarcane growing. There is nothing to prevent the other provinces from repeating the same performance and the result will be that we will be faced with the spectacle of competition and cut-throat competition which is facing the entire world to-day. Sir, interprovincial arrangements, nay, international arrangements even with regard to the agricultural produce will be necessary to find a solution for this problem of over-production. Sir, one more statement in the communiqué to which I should refer, as displaying a policy of defeatism that has overtaken the Madras Government and it is thus: 'Nothing that the Government can do will go very far to remove them till prices rise.' That is like saying that the disabilities of the agriculturists will exist till prices rise. Sir, prices cannot rise unless the Government moves in the matter. We have before us the example of what America is doing to raise the prices in that land, standing in a direct contrast to the attitude of this Government.

"Sir, passing on, I read with tears, and I believe every agriculturist will have read with tears, the tragic statement made by the Government as follows:—

'The Government received a very small portion of the great profit made in the boom period and they might logically claim that they should not reduce the revenue until that is all spent.'

"Sir, I do not know the basis of this information. So far as I know and so far as I have been able to ascertain from big landholder friends—for instance from the hon. Member sitting to my left—I can assure the Government that there has been no landlord that has made a fortune or laid by a great store at any time. Agriculture at its best was only self-sufficing and agriculture at present is in a plight where it is absolutely impossible to make both ends meet. Therefore, the boom period to which the communiqué and the consequent hoarding never existed. Agriculture never added and never will add to the coffers of the landlord."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"The hon. Member's time is ending."

MR. V. M. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR:—"One minute more, Sir. Before resuming my seat, I must place before the House the fact that

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sooner or later the question of land revenue taxation must be tackled and the sooner it is done the better. Sir, this House must consent to give up a large portion of the land revenue from its budget. I hope, Sir, that when the time comes hon. Members will tackle this question in right earnest.

"I also want to urge upon the serious consideration of the Government some modification of the steps by which land revenue arrears are recovered. Sir, the first step provided under the Revenue Recovery Act is the attachment of cattle, then food grains, then the attachment of crops standing on the land and then the land itself—Sir, various ryots' conferences held in my district have suggested that during this period of acute distress, the first two steps might be cut out and if necessary the final step of attaching the crops on the land or the land itself might be taken. This is suggested because we, the Hindus especially, have got a sentimental attachment to the cattle and to living beings around us. This attachment is universal because we find as for instance the Europeans are more attached to dogs than to human menials round them. That is sentiment. I plead that Government will consider the suggestion that has been put forward."

Mr. M. B. RANGASWAMI REDDI spoke in Tamil as follows:—

"கனம் அக்கிராஸ்திபதி அவர்களே !

"இவ்வருஷம் லாண்டு ரிவினியூ கிஸ்து குறையுமென்று நாங்கள் எதிர் பார்த்தபடி அரசினை கமிட்டியாரும் செய்யவில்லை. அவர்கள் செய்தது கூட கவர்ண்மெண்டார் செய்யவில்லை. என் நண்பர் டேனியல் தாமஸ் சொன்னார். அவரவர்கள் அவரவர்கள் டிஸ்டிரிக்ட்பற்றி பேசும் போது நானும் என் ஜில்லாவைப்பற்றி பேசுகிறேன் என்று சொன்னார். நான் எல்லாருமே பேசினபடி பேசவில்லை. உண்மையாய் இன்னு சொல்லவில்லை. முன்னாடி அதாவது 1933-ம் ஆண்டு நவம்பர் மீ 17-வியல் கனம் ரிவினியூ மெம்பருக்கும் கவர்ண்மெண்டுக்கும் எழுதியிருக்கிறேன். இந்த ராஜதானியில் மழை குறைவான ஜில்லாக்கள் நார்த் ஆற்காட் 10, செனத் ஆற்காட் 8, செங்கல்பட்டு 14, சித்தார் 6, ௬ இங் மழை என்று கவர்ண்மெண்ட் ரிபோர்ட்டில் காணப்பட்டிருக்கிறது. அதிலிருந்து நாங்கள் எவ்வளவு கஷ்டப்படுகிறோம் என்பது விளங்கும். மணிலாவானது எங்கள் ஜில்லாவில் சென்னை ராஜதானியில் விளையும் ஜில்லாக்களில் இரண்டாவது ஜில்லா. ஷே பாரம் ரூபாய் 120 ஒரு காலத்தில் விற்பதானது—தற்காலம் ரூபாய் 17 விற்கிறது. நெல், புகையிலை, வெல்லம் முதலியவைகள் கூட அப்படியே சரியான விலையில்லாமல் இருக்கிறது. கிணர் இரவை ஜில்லாவாகிய எங்கள் ஜில்லாவுக்கு மிகவும் அதிக சலுகை காட்டுவேண்டியது அவசியம். குடிகள் படுமபடு சொல்லத்தரமல்ல. நைஜாம், திருவாங்கூர், மைசூர், பிரஞ்சுகவர்ண்மெண்டுகள் ரிமிஷன் 30 பெர்சண்டுக்கு மேல் கொடுத்திருக்கிறார்கள். மேலும் ரிவினியூ உத்திரவில் 1858-ம் வருஷத்தில் செட்டில்மெண்டார் கவனித்து வரி போட்டதாயும் அதற்கு மேல் ரயிலும் போக்குவரத்து வசதிகளும் ஏற்பட்டதாலுண்டான விலைவாசிகள் லாபம் குடிகள் அடைவதாக சொல்லியிருக்கிறார்கள், அதுசரியல்ல. ரோட் செஸ்வரினாலும் ரயில் வே செஸ்வரினாலும் கவர்ண்மெண்ட் உதவியாலும் போடப்பட்டது, அது சரியான காரணமல்ல. 1858-ம் வருஷத்தில் பாரஸ்டு டிபார்ட்மெண்ட் இல்லை. எருதழை மேய்கால்வரி, கல்பைவரி கிடையாது. இப்பொழுது எத்தனையோ வரிகள் ஏற்பட்டுவிட்டது. குடிகள் மிகவும் கட்டலும் குடும்ப சிலவுக்கில்லாமலும் வரிகட்ட முடியாமலும் கஷ்டப்படுகிறார்கள். மேலும் முன் வருஷத்தில் யெல்லா லாண்டு ரிவினியூ வரிக்கும் அனா 2 ரிமிஷன் கொடுத்து இவ்வருஷம் நஞ்சை

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க்கு 2 அணை, புஞ்சைக்கு அணை 1 ரூபாய்க்கு குறைவு ஏற்படுத்தியதானது மிகவும் ஏமாற்றத்தை தருகிறது. இதுகளையோசித்து கவர்ன்மெண்டார் 100-க்கு 25 வீதமும் எங்கள் ஜில்லாக்களுக்கு அதிகமும் கொடுக்க வேண்டுமாய்க் கோருகிறேன்.

“ஸர் ஜேம்ஸ் மெஸ்டன் தீர்ப்பு ரத்துசெய்து நமது மகாணத்திற்கு 350 லட்சம் வஜாசெய்து நும்ப டிபார்ட்மெண்டுகளை சிருஷ்டித்து ஷே பணத்தை சிலவு செய்து விட்டார்கள். சம்பளம் உயர்த்தினார்கள். இதுகளை அப்போதே கவனித்தால் இவ்வளவு கஷ்டம் நேர்ந்திருக்காது. உத்தியோகஸ்தர் 40 ரூபாய் சம்பளம் வாங்குவரும் 40 ஏக்கர் வைத்திருக்கும் ஒரு குடியானவனும்கூட யென்று சொல்லக்கூட இடமில்லை. இதுகளை கவனித்து தீர்வை வஜா செய்யக்கோருகிறது.”

* Mr. K. P. RAMAN MENON:—“Mr. President, Sir, I feel it is my duty that I should say a few words on this motion, and in so doing I have to enter a protest at the inadequacy of the land revenue concession. It is with a feeling of surprise and disappointment that I read the Government Order, and I find that it contains nothing but a reiteration of the old arguments advanced in favour of resettlement. First of all, let me examine the Government's statement that they are entitled to half the produce of the land. Is it founded on the theory that the Hindu Rajas of old were so doing? I wonder from where the Government got this idea. For to speak the truth, as far as my reading of ancient Indian history goes, the Hindu Rajas never claimed more than one-sixth of the produce of the land, what is known as ‘shadamsom.’ Again the Government forget the fact that during the days of the Hindu Rajas, there were no stamp-fees, no court-fees, no road-cess, no income-tax, in fact none of these things which are now levied and collected from the people. All that the ancient Hindu Rajas levied was some revenue in return for the protection of person and property that they afforded to their subjects. Thus that theory falls to the ground.

“Then again, is this tax a tax on the land or on the avocation of the people? If it is on the avocation, where then is the justification for the Government for increasing the rate beyond all bounds of endurance? Take for instance income-tax; the highest rate of income-tax, is 4 annas in the rupee; why should the agriculturist pay 8 annas in the rupee.

“Then again, Sir, with reference to the prices, it is stated that the prices were very high during a certain period, that is, from 1912 to 1921, and during this period the ryots must have laid by a certain amount of money, which the Government are legitimately entitled to claim. Now are Government aware of this fact that any profits that the agriculturist has made out of the boom in prices have already been utilized in purchasing other lands, and thus there is nothing for him to fall back upon to meet the present crisis?

“Again, with reference to the prices, I have had the good fortune to be in management of my tarwad both during the years anterior to the old settlement of 1900 and posterior to the last resettlement of 1930. Therefore I know the price prevailing in my district before 1900. So

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far as the price of coconuts is concerned, the level of price has now gone down even below that which obtained during the years prior to the old settlement. Then the coconut was worth Rs. 20 to 25 per 1,000, and now it is selling at Rs. 12½ or Rs. 15 per 1,000; and this slump in price can be attributed to some extent to the importation of Ceylon coconut through Cochin. I am told that Cochin coconut oil has a great marketable value, and taking advantage of this, it appears some gentlemen in Cochin are importing coconuts from Ceylon, turning them out into oil and passing off the product as Cochin coconut oil. This is doubly disastrous, inasmuch as it destroys the oil industry in Malabar and also spoils the fair name of the Cochin oil.

“ Again, Sir, it was pointed out with reference to resettlement, that in the Native States of Travancore and Cochin there is a greater amount of remission of land revenue than that which obtains in this Province. A doubt was expressed as to this disparity in taxation and so I mention facts known to me personally. My tarwad owns lands in Cochin and in Malabar and so I can say that the disparity in the rate of assessment is striking. Although the income from the lands in Cochin State is almost the same as that I get from the lands in British India, this assessment in British India is more than double. For the Cochin lands I pay a revenue of Rs. 690; while for those in British India I pay Rs. 1,600 as revenue. In Cochin, out of the sum of Rs. 690 as revenue, the Durbar has, this year, remitted as much as one-fourth of that amount. Even with reference to the Government Order issued by the Government the benefit accruing therefrom has not been brought home to the ryots. For I wrote to some tahsildars in my district as to the exact effect of this Government Order; and I received replies from some that accounts for the amsams for revenue collections have not been yet prepared. That shows that sufficient instructions have not been given to the Revenue officers. May I point out that two out of the four kists are already over? Besides this, I have to say another fact also. After the resettlement operations in some taluks of my district, the agriculturists have to pay a higher rate of assessment than before; and it is not understood by the officers concerned whether this Government Order is to take effect with regard to those taluks where resettlement has not taken place also.

“ Again, Sir, there is another Government Order which has been issued by the Government. It is no doubt very beneficial to the ryots. It says that wherever lands have been reclassified, wherever unoccupied land has been converted into garden land, the assessment should be spread over a period of 12 years. But as a matter of fact the assessment is being collected, the total amount within three years. I had a talk with some officers in my district and from the conversation I learnt that they have not understood the Government Order correctly. An amsam official told me that the Settlement department prepared accounts wherein such increased taxes have to be collected within

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three years and these accounts have been confirmed by the Revenue Department. Thus the amsam official is bound to collect the assessment as enhanced within three years of the resettlement. What is the use of a Government Order which is not given effect to? I have written a letter to the Revenue Secretary about this and I do not know what action has been taken on this matter. I have not received any reply yet.

"It was suggested by Mr. Langley in his speech that, if as a matter of fact the crops are changed to sugarcane, it might be profitable to the ryots. I am afraid the gentleman who gave that information to Mr. Langley does not know the real state of affairs with regard to Malabar. I myself personally know the efforts made in this behalf by the late Kavalappara Moopil Nayar, and that big janmi himself told me that his efforts to raise some other crop instead of the usual one on his lands proved useless. Again, Sir, I know a certain European company, I forget the name, started a sugarcane station very near the Mankara railway station on the banks of the Ponnani river. For two or three years they carried on sugarcane cultivation and afterwards dropped it altogether. If big European companies like that could not work out such schemes, I fail to see how an ordinary cultivator could do it with any profit to him. So the proposition that sugarcane cultivation will be profitable to the cultivators is perhaps illusory. So far as our districts are concerned, unless more capital is forthcoming, it will not be possible for people to take up cane cultivation. It is not merely on account of conservatism of the ryots that they do not take up to cane cultivation. They require more capital and such capital is not forthcoming. Our people look askance at investing more capital, or they have no capital.

"Sir, we certainly expected the Government would have accepted the recommendation of the Finance Committee and reduced the present rate of tax to pre-settlement level. That also has not been done and it has caused disappointment to people all round. I submit that, if as a matter of fact you want a population that is contented and not discontented at the attitude of the Government, you will have to reduce land-tax and chalk out a new policy so far as land revenue is concerned. The names of Sir Thomas Munroe and others are no doubt regarded with great respect, but they should not be worshipped as fetishes. As has been practically shown, these theories do not work now. You must set about and find out what is necessary for the irreducible minimum of a living wage of the people of this Presidency, what is the net produce of the land and then make the necessary deduction for cultivation expenses, etc., and settle once and for all what percentage you will take out of the net produce. Unless and until you do that, this haphazard system of raising the land revenue once in so many years will not work. I therefore appeal to the Government to give up that line of land revenue policy and chalk out some other policy and thus free the ryot population of this Presidency from perpetual uncertainty as to his economic condition."

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* Mr. V. P. NARAYANAN NAMBIYAR :—“ Mr. President, when during the last session of the Council it fell to my unhappy lot to move that the consideration of the resolution be adjourned to this session, along with other hon. Members, I too thought that there would be some real alleviation of an exceptional situation, because the hon. Gentleman, the Revenue Member, had with great earnestness said:

‘ I can assure the House that the Government fully realize the seriousness of the present situation and the difficult position in which the ryots are placed in respect of land revenue and water-cess.’

“ This solemn pronouncement was made on the eleventh day of the eleventh month of the year that has just drawn to a close, yet the New Year gift of the Madras Government to the suffering ryots of the Presidency was non-acceptance in its entirety of even the modest recommendations of the Finance Committee. The Press Communiqué announcing the concessions in respect of payment of land revenue and water-cess attempts to justify the position of the Government. But a close consideration of the document serves more to bring out in clearer light two facts, (1) that the Government of Madras is a paper Government, a Government which ignores the human aspect of the present depression and which relies merely on arithmetical calculations worked out on paper and (2) that even when dealing with exceptional situations the Madras Government will not come down from the Olympic heights of prestige. Otherwise there is no reason for the Government to reject the recommendation of 18½ per cent in respect of wet assessment made by the Finance Committee and stick on to the 12½ per cent proposal of the Government. Anyway, I feel relieved to find that the prestige of the Government is worth but 6½ per cent. The Finance Committee made the recommendation of 18½ per cent only for districts and portions of districts where the resettlement rates have been issued in or after the year 1918-19. Prior debates on enhanced assessment have made it clear that the resettlement rates are unacceptable. I do not want to repeat the arguments advanced more than once on the floor of the House, but there is an additional ground to show that the resettlement rates have not been correctly fixed. When the late Romesh Chander Dutt wrote a series of open letters to the Government regarding the land revenue policy of the Government, the Board of Revenue, Madras, in a reply to the Government of India's enquiry into the matter, wrote as follows in paragraph 35 of the Resolution of the Board of Revenue No. 542, dated 6th December 1900 :—

‘ The normal gross produce, i.e., the gross produce struck on a comparison of good and bad years, is valued by a very favourable commutation rate which is usually considered below the average of the previous twenty years for which, moreover, all years of scarcity and high prices are excluded.’

“ Have all years of high prices been excluded in fixing the resettlement rates? Sir, they have not been excluded.

“ How widespread is the dissatisfaction with the Government's attitude towards the question of relief to the ryots may be judged from

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the numerous conferences and protest meetings held all over the Province demanding a uniform reduction of at least 25 per cent immediately. If the reports received from the Collectors, the say of hon. Members representing the various districts, the grievances urged by the many deputationists, and the resolutions passed at the numerous conferences—all tend to the irresistible conclusion that the ryot is unable to pay the land revenue, that his capacity to pay is nil, may I ask, without attempting to make debating points, what further facts and figures do the Government want to grant substantial relief to the poor ryot? Lamenting over the 'fate of nation-building departments and Muslim education' does not gain for the Government the support of anybody. For, if one thing is clearer than anything else, it is that the present depression has hit all districts hard and those who have been asking for relief have been demanding relief for all districts. How acute is the distress and how very difficult it has become to pay the land revenue may be seen from one typical instance from Malabar. The Zamorin of Calicut who presided over the Second Malabar Land Revenue Conference spoke as follows:—

'As for the actual hardships the people suffer they have become unbearable. I hope I shall not be accused of impertinence if I make an allusion to my own case. Land revenue due by the Zamorin's estate comes about one lakh and seventy-five thousand rupees. On the 31st of March I had to pay for fasli 1342 Rs. 13,000 and odd exclusive of huge sums paid through tenants. The Panniyankara amsam adhi kari would not leave my house unless and until the whole sum was paid in cash. Not a rupee out of this huge sum has been recovered from those who are liable to pay. You may be surprised at my being in possession of such a large sum as Rs. 13,000 at one time. I may tell you twelve out of the thirteen thousand represents the malikhana I received just two weeks before. What my treasury balance or bank balance looked like on 1st of April I need not describe. At the other extreme there are cases which I could name of extremely poor people, so-called janmis, whose cooking and other utensils have completely disappeared, the poor fellows crying how to cook to-morrow's meal. I am not exaggerating.'

It will not be easy for the Government to brush aside this version as an exaggerated picture of the situation, for people in Malabar have reasons to believe that the report of their popular Collector, Mr. T. B. Russell, whose services Malabar is indeed sorry to lose, has brought to the notice of the Government the actual state of affairs in the district. At a Darbar held in Calicut on the 18th of November 1933, the Collector is reported to have said:

'I think you will listen with greater attention to what I have to say on some of them, if I begin with that which I am sure, is uppermost in your mind as it is in mine, the question of the great fall in the prices of agricultural produce, the hardship resulting therefrom to agriculturists and the consequent difficulty of paying land revenue. The attitude of Government was stated clearly in the recent debate in the Legislative Council, when the two Government Speakers made it plain that Government were giving the closest consideration both to the difficulty of paying taxes on the one hand and the need for providing Government with funds adequately to perform at least its essential functions on the other. Of necessity the former consideration is my direct concern and for the present I can only express my fullest sympathy for the agriculturist in the difficult times and assure you that any recommendation I make to Government takes full account of it.' (The Madras Mail, Monday, November 20, 1933.)

Should not a Government which cares for the well-being of the people do something effective when conditions are so bad? Some days back

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at a meeting held in the Loyola College in connexion with the birth control agitation, the Rev. Father Basenach, an eminent Professor of Economics, said as follows:—

'The poverty of India's teeming millions is indeed appalling but it is seen just as much in the thinly peopled as in the thickly peopled regions and requires no hypothesis of overpopulation to account for it, there being an ample, sufficient cause in various obvious and admitted evils. When salt shall be sold in India at cost price and usurers punished as thieves, when rational village tribunals and properly paid Police are at work, when fixity of tenure is universal and deep wells abundant, when each village has its grain store to meet failure of crops, when the peasantry is relieved of a third of their taxation, then and not till then, if the woeful poverty continues, will it be time to attribute it to overpopulation.'

May I ask the Government whether the time has not come to relieve the peasantry of a third of their taxation? If the hon. Gentlemen occupying the Treasury Bench do hold the view that the time has not yet come, the verdict of future historians about them, to borrow the words of a distinguished citizen of Madras, will be:

'There are many high-placed people who seem to expect that the agriculturist should consent to live on half the income in order to enable the Government to carry on with doubled expenditure. These are the direct spiritual descendants of those who made the French Revolution both possible and inevitable.'

"Sir, these words were uttered by a gentleman who should to-day have been occupying the Treasury Bench had he not resigned his appointment as Law Member. I refer to Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastriyar. Harsh words these, but it is obvious they have been provoked by the unreasonable attitude of the hon. Gentlemen occupying the Treasury Bench, who seem to have forgotten that there could be no more imperative responsibility than that of enabling the ryot, who represents the vast bulk of the people of this Province, to live."

* Rao Bahadur A. T. PANNIRSELVAM:—"Mr. President, Sir, for the past three years, and in particular, during the last two sessions of the Council, this question of land revenue remission has been practically a standing resolution before the Council. At almost every available sitting of the House, this question has come up with a systematic regularity, I might say with a tiresome regularity. I should perfectly sympathize with the Government if they felt sick of this resolution being brought up time and again and the self-same arguments being advanced on every occasion. But I can assure the Government that we, for our part, do not relish bringing it up time and again and trying to convince the Government on the plight of the peasants of the Province. If, however, this question comes up on every available occasion and whenever it comes up, if every member thinks it his duty to have his say, I feel that the Government have to thank themselves, because it is the attitude of the Government that has been forcing on us this position. We do not like coming forward like mendicants time after time with a persistency and importunity which in any other case would have had a better response. On this question of remission, this House has been adopting an attitude about which the Government could have no cause to complain. Whenever the Government took a sympathetic

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attitude, the House has readily responded. Last year, the Government gave us a suspension with a possible final remission of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. However unsatisfactory the amount of remission was, however little it went to meet the needs of the situation, we welcomed it and expressed our heart-felt thanks to the Government and supported them in carrying out their work. In November last, when this resolution came again before the House, we had that sympathetic, and even encouraging speech from the hon. the Revenue Member, and as a consequence, there was not a single Member of this House who demurred to the postponement of the consideration of this resolution to this meeting. Just about that time, meetings were held in every village in every district, and the ryots passed resolutions wherein they described their pitiable conditions graphically and requested the Government to grant a remission of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent which alone would meet the needs of the situation. In spite of our feeling that a very much higher percentage, say 25 per cent, of remission was required, we received the recommendations of the Finance Committee with some feeling of relief, because we felt that giving effect to those recommendations would go some way to meet the needs of the situation. We thought we had something after all, because we had the unanimous backing of the Finance Committee. We were told that the recommendation of the Finance Committee was unanimous. If that recommendation had been accepted in toto, this resolution might probably not have been pressed to-day, or at least, very few would have come forward to support the resolution after the generous gesture shown by the Government in accepting the modest recommendations of the Finance Committee. If therefore we feel ourselves obliged to insist on a remission of 25 per cent, it is due, if I may say so, to the ungenerous and unreasonable attitude on the part of the Government in refusing to accept the very modest recommendations of the Finance Committee.

“As far as the merits of the case are concerned, I feel I can add very little to the debate. Arguments which have been advanced since yesterday have been advanced for the last two years and repeated over and over again by hon. Members. I do not think I can improve the position by merely saying in my own words those arguments and those reasons which necessitate a very generous treatment of the ryots on the part of the Government. If, however, I wish to say a few words on this occasion, it is merely to utter a word of warning to the Government. Till recently this question was treated, as it ought to be treated, wholly as an economic question, as a question affecting the position of the peasant and the agriculturist; but recently, Sir, signs have not been wanting to show that in certain quarters political capital is sought to be made out of this situation. Parties are being formed, apparently to afford relief to, or advocate the cause of, the peasants, but they are parties which really have a political colour. I wish the Government took note of the fact that the present distressed condition of the ryots is sought to be taken advantage of by political forces which might not

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always be conducive to law and order. The Government would therefore be strengthening those forces by refusing to give this little relief to the people, to which they are entitled, the little relief which has been recommended by the Finance Committee, the little relief which may not go very far, but would certainly convince the people that the Government is sympathetic to them and that they are considerate in their demands.

“ Finally, I wish to say a few words about my own district. I feel it necessary to do so, because the other representatives of my district have already spoken last November and they are precluded from speaking to-day. Speaking on 10th November last, Mr. G. Ranganatha Mudaliyar said that he would not like to put forward any special plea on behalf of his district. If to-day I wish to say a few words by way of special pleading for my own district, it is not because I want to copy other hon. Members who have spoken for special consideration being shown to their own districts, but it is because of the havoc caused by the recent cyclone in certain portions of my district subsequent to the debate of the 10th November. It is true that the Government have stated in their communiqué that this remission would not preclude the granting of the usual remission under the remission rules. But I want to ask whether those remission rules would take note of anything except the damage to the paddy fields by the cyclone. If the departmental rules for remission were applied only with regard to the havoc caused to the paddy fields by the cyclone, any remission that might be granted would not afford any real relief at all, because there are thousands of other ways in which the cyclone has injured the people. Apart from the loss of life of a few hundred people, thousands of cattle have perished and thousands of revenue-yielding coconut trees have been uprooted. And where the cyclone has not been strong enough for the trees to be uprooted, all the produce expected from those trees has been lost. I am more particularly referring to the produce of the tamarind tree which supplements the income of the ryot for the year. Then again acres and acres of plantain gardens have been devastated wholesale, just at a time, four or five weeks before the Pongal season, when the crop was just maturing. If the Tanjore ryot gets anything out of the plantain gardens, it is only during the Pongal season; it is only then his crop matures and he realizes some money; but this cyclone pulled down almost every plantain in all parts of the district. It was not merely the coastal taluks of Shiyali, Mayavaram, Negapatam and Tiruturaipundi that suffered most, but even the far-off Tanjore taluk was not spared. Three or four days after the actual cyclone, I visited some of these parts and it was a heart-rending sight to see large extents of plantain and betel gardens with not a single tree or plant standing up and everything pulled down by the cyclone.

“ It was stated that relief in the case of the more well-to-do mirasidars is not urgent, but I must say that this cyclone has caused them greater loss and made them more helpless than even the poor peasants

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and the poor pattadars. Hundreds of their cattle have been killed; their coconut trees have been uprooted, their tamarind trees have dropped their fruits and all their plantain trees have been pulled down. In addition to all this, they have also this loss to face, namely, the thousands of huts they had provided for their cultivators have been destroyed and every one of these huts has to be restored at their cost. No doubt the Government have been generous as far as cyclone relief is concerned and I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Tanjore district, of tendering my heart-felt thanks to the Government for their very generous contribution of Rs. 5,000 in regard to the cyclone relief. But that is a relief which will be given to the poor man who has lost his property, and not to the well-to-do landlord who is driven to the necessity of finding the wherewithal to put up these huts for their tenants. In this general depression when the yield from their lands is almost nil and when they find it difficult to pay their assessment, they are faced with the problem of finding money to substitute the cattle which they have lost and re-build the huts for their tenants and cultivators.

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"In conclusion, I should like to state that, if the Finance Committee's recommendation had been accepted, we would with a feeling of gratefulness towards the Government not have pressed this resolution. At least I for one would not have lent my support to this resolution for the 25 per cent remission. I can only submit that there is no other way now left to us except to lend our whole-hearted support to the resolution of Mr. Arasu. Our action is guided more by the irresponsiveness of the Government than because we have any desire to embarrass the Government."

* Rao Bahadur R. SRINIVASAN:—"Mr. President, Sir, hon. Members who spoke yesterday and to-day have shown one side of the picture. I should like to show the other side of the picture. The rich landholders try to have more lands in addition to the lands they already possess. They would not give their lands to the benefit of the poor people. They want to shut out poor people who can take the land and cultivate them. They do not utilize the land for the purposes they hold it. They abuse the land; they abuse the produces of the land and the water in the village. Lands need not be used for the cultivation of paddy alone. They can be used for producing sugarcane, tobacco, maize and so many other classes of grains. The big landholders will not allow their lands to be used for grazing of their own cattle, poultry-farming, etc. These big landholders want to shut out the poor people. They will keep all the lands for themselves; they will not utilize them; they want to live in luxury. They abuse not only their landed assets but also their labour assets.

"Since two years I was trying to get a piece of land, to the extent of a few acres for an ex-service man. This piece of land was wanted by the mirasidar himself. I tried my best. I saw the Revenue Divisional Officer, but the influence of the mirasidar went too far. The

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Revenue Inspector said that the land was required for the common purposes of the village. That opinion was endorsed by the Revenue Divisional Officer, and it was endorsed by the Collector. The land was not actually required for any common purpose. It was required only for the private use of the mirasidar. A big landholder would not use the land and at the same time he would shut out others. Similarly he abuses the labour also. For instance, the wages the landholder was giving some years before was four measures of paddy a day which was worth about eight annas. Now the very same four measures of paddy is worth only two annas. The poor labourer has to feed himself, his wife, and children, cover their nakedness and do so many other things. Now remission is asked for by the mirasidars. They have not increased wages of their labourers in coin or kind to meet the present day requirement. They not only abuse the asset of the land but they abuse the labour also. They roll in motor cars. They live in palatial buildings in the city. Mention was made that they had to pledge their jewels. If these people want to stick to their land depriving others from utilizing the land, they must pledge all what they possess.

"The administration must go on. We want large sums of money for education, for medical aid, roads, sanitation, irrigation, justice, police and so many other things. Are we to forego all these necessary and most important things on account of the luxuries of the big landholders who want remission? I, therefore, take this opportunity of impressing upon the land-owners either to utilize the land themselves or to give up the land for the benefit of others. At the same time I am not hard-hearted towards land-owners. I must say that remission should be given in those areas affected by cyclone and to those who own less than 20 acres or so. I am against the remission of assessment in the case of big land-owners.

"I may mention, Sir, that this land-owning class monopolizes the services. They are everywhere. It is not because the land does not yield they have no other alternative to live upon. Some of the landholders are occupying high positions under the Government. Are they to get remission? If I may be permitted to say so, a lot of Members of this hon. House are land-owners. Therefore I oppose this resolution."

* Rao Bahadur R. K. VENUGOPAL NAYUDU:—"Mr. President, Sir, so much has been said by hon. Members of this House regarding the general principles which should guide the solution of land revenue problems. I have nothing to add to what has already been said. But I shall confine myself for the present to the affairs of my district, South Arcot. It is my duty, Sir, to make a general appeal for remission with regard to South Arcot along with other districts. I have also to make a special plea for the South Arcot along with the Tanjore district. The agricultural products in the South Arcot district are mainly three, i.e., paddy, groundnut and sugarcane. It is needless for me, Sir, to add that all these products have utterly failed. The position is worse this year than during the previous year. With regard to paddy, there has

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not only been fall in prices; but a pest has also spoiled the paddy crop in some taluks of the district. Thousands and thousands of acres of sugarcane—sugarcane cultivation is very costly—have been devastated by a pest unheard of within the living memory and also by the cyclone in the South Arcot district. With regard to groundnut also, not only has there been a fall in prices; there has been fall in quantity of the produce. That crop also has been devastated by pests, and untimely rains. When all these three products have miserably failed, it is, I submit, the duty of the Government to come forward with generous help to the ryots. The arguments of special plea put forward by the hon. Member for Tanjore apply in toto to the South Arcot district also especially to Chidambaram and Cuddalore taluks. Not only some taluks of the Tanjore district but also some taluks of the South Arcot district have been terribly affected by the cyclone. The cyclone effects have been the worst in the Shiyali taluk of the Tanjore district and in the Chidambaram taluk of the South Arcot district. The havoc committed by the cyclone cannot be fully described by words. The tamarind trees have been uprooted; the sugarcane plants have been completely spoiled; paddy which was ready for harvest was harvested by the cyclone itself and the storm carried away the produce to places unknown. In these circumstances at least the minimum reduction of 25 per cent is essential and nothing less than that will satisfy the ryots of the South Arcot district. The misery of the ryot has been increased manyfold by this cyclone. The Government have promised to take into consideration the relief that can be given under the Standing Orders of Board of Revenue. When they do so, I request that they should not forget the parts affected most by the cyclone in the South Arcot district. Whatever may be the relief that may be given, will not be enough to enable the ryot to pay the balance without difficulty. At the present moment the ryot has nothing on hand to pay the kist. Even last year many of the jewels worn by their wives and daughters had been pledged by the ryots; this year they are trying their utmost to sell them away, but nobody will come forward to purchase the same. When such is the state of things, how can the ryots pay the kist? Any relief which is to be given, to have any effect, must be given immediately. If the relief is not granted immediately, it is equivalent to no relief being given. Even before I left South Arcot for this meeting, I heard that the village munsifs of some of the villages, which were inundated for two days by sea water during the storm, have applied for the help of the Sub-Magistrate and the Police to attach the movable properties of the ryots. When such is the case, I request that the Government should come forward immediately at least with a remission of 25 per cent, quite independent of the remission promised under the Standing Orders of Board of Revenue.

“I would like to point out another matter. The Government have made a distinction between dry lands and wet lands. That in my humble opinion is unreasonable. Dry lands in the Tanjore and South Arcot districts have suffered most by untimely rains, pests and storm and cyclone. Dry lands produce groundnut, sugarcane, etc. All these

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crops have been spoiled and failed. I therefore request that the Government will be pleased to reconsider their decision and grant the same rate of remission for the dry lands as for the wet lands. With these words I support the resolution under discussion."

* MAHBOOB ALI BAIG SAHIB Bahadur:—" Mr. President, Sir, it does not require eloquent speeches or elaborate arguments to bring home to the Government the miserable condition of the ryot in the country. Any passing man can find for himself the precipitous fall in the income of the ryot on account of the sudden decline in prices of agricultural products. It can therefore be imagined easily, that unless his liabilities are reduced or his assets are increased, the ryot will go to rack and ruin. That the Government have been keenly alive to this catastrophe will be easily seen from the gesture they have made in the recent communiqué. But I am afraid, Sir, that the Government have not addressed themselves to the problem in its correct perspective.

" The issues that arise out of this problem are: first, whether it is possible to revive the prices; if so, what are the steps necessary to be taken in that behalf. Secondly, if after investigation it is found that the prices could not be revived to their former level, what are the steps necessary to see that the ryot is in a position to adjust his budget, so that he and the Government may be saved from the impending catastrophe. I have heard, Sir, with close attention the several speeches delivered by hon. Members of this House both yesterday and to-day. We must be very thankful to Mr. Langley for the very valuable observations he made yesterday in his speech, in that he correctly attributed the cause of the fall in prices to the general economic depression in the world on account of the accumulation of gold in the hands of a few industrial and creditor countries and the consequent decrease in the volume of gold in the money markets of the world, and also the over-production on account of competition, in the industrial countries. Consistently, therefore, Sir, he should have held that the liabilities of the ryots must also be reduced in accordance with the fall in prices. His suggestion, Sir, that some other products, such as sugar, should be cultivated, is a good suggestion; but it does not go the whole length which is necessary. Sir, a general rise in the price of commodities is necessary for solving this problem. If we investigate this problem and see whether it is possible to restore the prices to their former level, we are confronted with very intricate and international problems. The currency or the monetary system of the world has become so unstable and chimerical. We are all aware, Sir, of the gigantic efforts made by the Government of the United States by which it seeks to distribute money among the people, in the shape of wages, by undertaking huge works, so that money may be circulated among its people. Their efforts to restrict production are also in progress side by side. There are certain other countries which resort to inflation of currency, which is considered to be a doubtful remedy. In addition to this, in the particular case of India, the ratio question stands in our way, and that is

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considered an additional reason for the fall of prices in India. All these remedies, Sir, are not, however, within the competency of this Local Government, and they are not easy also to deal with. Therefore, we come, Sir, to the irresistible conclusion that at least in the near future, a rise in prices is impossible.

“ Then, the next issue arises, as to what under these circumstances, if a rise in the price of commodities is not possible, the Government or the people can do, so that the ryot can adjust his budget. Government are aware that it is necessary for the economic existence either of the ryot or of the Government that the ryot's budget must be adjusted. The only difference between the ryot and the Government is: whereas the Government can force its citizens to pay their usual taxes so that its assets may be in the normal condition, the ryot cannot force his buyers to pay the usual prices for his commodities. That is the only difference. The plea for the revision of these taxes is not a plea, Sir, so much based on the failure of crop on account of drought or inundation; it is not a case where the ryots have got money and do not pay; but it is simply a case where the purchasing value of the rupee has gone high and consequently prices of commodities have gone low. Is it not just, proper and wise that the Government which received the revenue and expended it in the past when the rupee value in terms of purchasing power was at a certain ratio, now, that that ratio has changed, should collect taxes and spend them according to the change in the ratio, in regard to the value of the rupee in terms of its purchasing power? What is happening now is this: the classes that receive money from the Government are reaping benefit at the sacrifice of the giving classes, i.e., the ryots and others who pay taxes to the Government. It is therefore, Sir, up to the Government to take courage in both hands and pursue a very strong policy, because extraordinary circumstances require extraordinary remedies. I think, Sir, it is a very unpleasant suggestion that I am now making to the Government, but that is the only and the logical conclusion in view of the rise in the value of the rupee. Why should the ryot who was paying Rs. 10 when the rice bag was worth Rs. 9 or Rs. 8 pay the very same amount of Rs. 10, as kist now when the rice bag is selling at Rs. 2-8-0 or Rs. 3? Why should the receiver of Government money, I mean the Government official, receive the same sum of Rs. 100 as before, now that the money value in terms of purchasing power has risen twofold or threefold? It is nothing but the logical conclusion of the economic disturbance of money value in the market. Therefore, my submission is this: let the Government have always this before them as their motto, that the Government exists for the people and not the people for the Government.”

* Mr. T. S. RAMASWAMI AYYAR:—“ Mr. President, Sir, I find that the proceedings of the Finance Committee, dated the 4th of January 1934, which have some bearing on the resolution now under discussion have been placed on the table of the House to-day. Perhaps, Sir, it may be worth while, before the discussion proceeds further, to note the

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principles on which this resolution was originally put forward, the principles on which the Finance Committee came to a decision and also try to find out how far the Government are prepared to concede the points raised either by the Council or by the Finance Committee. I think, Sir, when the resolution was moved in January last year, it was based on the fact that prices had gone down steeply and it was absolutely necessary, if the agriculturist was to be placed on his feet, that he should be given some relief by way of remission of land-tax. The resolution was based, as was remarked by the previous speaker, not on the ground of failure of crops but on that of the fall in prices. Under the Standing Orders, it was not possible for the Government themselves to give relief in such a case; but the Council thought that an inroad might be made on the policy of the Government with regard to land revenue settlement and some relief should be given to the ryot. We are thankful to the Government for having accepted the Council's resolution. Though originally it was a case of suspension, later the suspended tax was remitted. Therefore, the Council's resolution was in a way accepted by the Government. I say 'in a way' because though the Government accepted the principle of the resolution, they gave effect to the recommendation only in respect of about twelve districts in the Presidency. The Government thought that in the case of the recently settled districts, viz., those that were settled after 1918-19, the commutation prices were fixed at a higher rate than in the case of other districts. They thought that a case had been made out in regard to those districts. But when the resolution was again renewed at the instance of my hon. Friend, Mr. Arasu, in November last, it was felt by various Members of this House, that the case for remission existed not only in the case of the twelve districts that had been granted relief by the Government but in the other districts as well. When the Government expressed their view that it would be possible for them to consider the situation after receipt of the reports from Collectors and after consideration by the Board of Revenue, the Council agreed to have the resolution adjourned to this session. After the Government received the reports, they prepared a note for the consideration of the Finance Committee as to the ways in which effect could be given to the suggestions made on the floor of this House. The Government made certain proposals which roughly were as follows. In the case of the recently settled districts, they thought a remission of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent might be granted with regard to wet lands, and with regard also to the water-rates. In the case of the other districts, the Government suggested that the suspension of the kist could be to the extent of about $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. With regard to dry lands again, the Government came forward with a suggestion that dry lands in the recently settled districts could have $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent suspension. When the question was placed before the Finance Committee, one anomaly was noticed, viz., that while remission with regard to dry lands was to be given in respect of the recently settled districts, no concession was to be granted at all in the case of the other districts. In the case of those other districts

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certainly suspension was to be given in respect of wet lands, but with regard to dry lands no relief was to be afforded. The Finance Committee thought that it was necessary that, if relief was to be given to the agriculturist, it should go round and everybody should be benefited.

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"In the case of dry lands, it could not be said with as much force as in the case of wet lands that there was great difference in resettlement rates. Whether the districts were settled after 1918 or before 1918 or 1919, the increase in the settlement rates was not so different between district and district as to make out a case in respect of some districts and not in respect of other districts. The Finance Committee therefore thought that $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent remission all round would meet the case.

"Now, Sir, the Government's proposals were sought to be increased by the Finance Committee with regard to the other rates. The Government said that $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent could be suspended in the case of the recently settled districts; the Finance Committee recommended that $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent would be needed. In the case of the other districts the Government's suggestion was that there could be a suspension of $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent; the Finance Committee recommended that that rate could easily be increased to $9\frac{3}{8}$ per cent. The Finance Committee came to this conclusion after a thorough examination of the question by not only taking into consideration the need of the agriculturist but also the finances of the Government. We are glad to find that in respect of most of the recommendations of the Finance Committee, the Government have accepted them, but the question arises as to whether or not the Government could accept one main recommendation of the Finance Committee, which according to the Government entails a little more loss of revenue, and that was with regard to the suggestion that in the case of the recently settled districts, the remission should be at the rate of $18\frac{3}{4}$ instead of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I think that was the only point on which the Government and the Finance Committee disagreed. If I speak to-day on the merits of the case, it is only to state to this House that under the circumstances it was possible for the Finance Committee to go forward only with a suggestion like the one made by them.

"It may be within the knowledge of this House that two years ago, the Finance Committee of this House was constituted into Retrenchment Committee, which had to cut down the normal expenditure of this Province and to set up what may be called a 'standard budget' because it was expected that the income of this Province would go down. Originally, the Government contemplated that the income would go down on account of the fall in excise revenue, but the Retrenchment Committee even at its first meeting stated that the Government should anticipate not only a fall in excise revenue but also in land revenue. The Members of the Retrenchment Committee felt that the prices of agricultural produce tended to fall. That point also was noted by the Government. The Retrenchment Committee went even farther

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than the Government originally wanted them to do, and were of opinion that the normal budget should be so balanced as to cut down the expenditure by about a crore or so. We now find, Sir, that the normal budget has been cut down to that extent. This aspect was considered by the Finance Committee at its meeting on the 4th January last. It had to take into consideration the fact that since the budget had recently been cut down it would be difficult to prune it still further. The Committee took into consideration the loss of revenue that any remission would entail. By giving effect to the resolution of this Council that was passed in January last, the loss of revenue to Government was about 33 lakhs. This year, unless I am mistaken, I think the recommendation of the Finance Committee would entail a loss of revenue to the extent of about 60 lakhs or so. But the Government by giving effect to all but one of the recommendations of the Finance Committee have agreed to forego a revenue of about 52 lakhs or so."

The hon. Sir HOPETOUN STOKES:—"Sir, the Finance Committee's recommendation worked out to three-quarters of a crore and the Government are proposing to give about 60 lakhs."

Mr. T. S. RAMASWAMI AYYAR:—"I am obliged to the hon. the Finance Member for the correction. The Finance Committee's recommendation entailed a loss of about 75 lakhs and the Government have now agreed to forego a loss of about 60 lakhs. It has been remarked by previous speakers that, if the Government had agreed to the recommendations of the Finance Committee, it would have been possible for this House to accept the position taken up by Government and not have pressed this motion to a division at all. In a matter like this, one has to realize the difficulties that the Finance Committee were confronted with in balancing the budget for a year like this. For example, on the question of Part II Schemes, the Finance Committee had to bestow their most anxious consideration, and they could not easily bring themselves to cut down items of expenditure on some very important essentials. As a matter of fact, it was with the greatest difficulty that they could make themselves responsible for cutting out of the budget a lakh of rupees required for the supply of radium to the Government hospitals. The Committee felt that the purchase of radium at a time like this would be a great advantage specially when it was very much in need for cases of cancer, but the coat had to be cut according to the cloth and so the purchase had to be given up this year. If I have to refer to this detail and also to the fact that the Finance Committee had to decrease the demand for village communications and rural water-supply, it is because it was felt by the Finance Committee that it was not an easy thing to take the responsibility for much retrenchment.

"On the other hand, Sir, the case of the agriculturist was certainly a very hard one and all other subjects that should otherwise invoke

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the attention of a responsible Government had, as it were, to be put aside, because the need for giving relief to the agriculturist was so great. I refer to these matters in detail to show that the Finance Committee did not pass their resolution in a light-hearted manner. The Committee went into the whole question and while appreciating the Government's point of view it did its best with the information that was available before it to meet the case of the agriculturist as well. I wish that it had been possible for the Government to accept the recommendations of the Finance Committee entirely, but according to the Press Communiqué we find that the Government have accepted the other recommendations of the Committee and have not been able to accept the recommendation with regard to the remission of kist in the recently settled districts.

"The Finance Committee also went into the question of affording other reliefs to the agriculturist. For example, it was found possible to make some provision in the budget for appointing a marketing officer. The Finance Committee also appreciated one view-point which was expressed by more than one Member of this House, namely, that some attempt should be made by the Government to give facilities to the agriculturists to change the crop. It was thought desirable that wherever possible sugarcane should be tried in the place of paddy. Accordingly, the Finance Committee accepted the recommendation of the Government that a demonstration farm should be opened at Pattukottai in the Tanjore district in the new delta area to encourage the ryots to grow sugarcane instead of paddy. These by themselves may be small matters, but they indicate the manner in which the tackling of this question could be attempted. We are now in a state of world-wide depression and he would indeed be a brave man who could say 'I shall give a ready solution to the problem.' We can only suggest various methods by which the condition of the agriculturists could be alleviated.

"There is one suggestion that I would like to make and that is, that the Government should come forward with a grant for giving loans to the agriculturists. The trouble to-day in the economic condition of the world, and especially of this country and our Province in particular is that, while there is a plethora of money, the agriculturists' credit is very low. Governments can command any amount of money if they only want it, at a cheap rate, but the ordinary ryot is not able to raise money, and that is because, as they say, though there is money, there is no credit. The agriculturist commands very little credit in the market due to the fall in prices which has adversely affected the value of the land. He cannot raise money even by mortgaging his lands, for the banker or the money-lender is not prepared to lend large sums to the agriculturist. If, on the other hand, Government only care to put forward a big scheme—of course it requires the courage of a Roosevelt—they could raise large sums of money and advance them to the agriculturists on long term loans. After all, the

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Government can only get from the agriculturist what he can pay, but they should try and make it possible for him to pay. There are other avenues also which Government should certainly explore before they can say that it is not possible to do anything further.

"In conclusion, I suggest that this Council do seriously take into consideration the recommendations of the Finance Committee before finally coming to a conclusion on the resolution."

At this stage Mr. M. A. Muthiah Chettiyar took the Chair.

Rao Bahadur P. C. MUTHU CHETTIYAR addressed the House in 1 p.m.
Tamil:—

"கனம் அக்கிராசனதிபதி அவர்களே! நிலவரிகளில் 1343-ம் பசலிக்கு வஜா செய்து குறைத்து வசூல் செய்யவேண்டுமென்பதை நான் ஆதரிக்கிறேன்.

"ஒவ்வொரு கணவான்களும் அவரவர்கள் ஜில்லாவின் கஷ்டங்களை சொல்வதும் நஞ்சை பயிர்தான் விலைவாசி நஷ்டமெனவும் புஞ்சை பயிர் அத்தனை இல்லாததுபோலவும் அவரவர்கள் எதெதில் ஞாபகமோ அதையே பேசுகிறார்கள்.

"நண்பர் ஆனரபிள் மெம்பர் பாத்ரோ அவர்கள் இந்த ஹவுசில் எதையும் தாக்கி பேசவில்லவர்தான். ஆனால் எனக்கு வெகுசால் சிநேகமுள்ளவர். அவர் பேசுகையில் 10 ரூபாய்க்குள்பட்ட பட்டாதார்களுக்கு பூறு வஜா செய்யவேண்டுமென்றும் அதற்கு மேற்பட்டவர்களுக்கு ஒன்றும் வஜா செய்யக்ூடாதென்றும் அவர்களைப்பற்றி ஆக்ரோஷமாயும் அவரது அபிமான ஜில்லாவிற்கு மட்டும் 50 பெர்சன்டு தள்ளிகொடுக்கவேண்டுமாயும் பேசினார். அவர் லாய்ருயிருக்கும் போது ஏழைகளிடம் சம்பாத்தியம் செய்தவர் அல்ல. யாரோ ஒருவர் பெரும் பட்டாதாருள்ளவரிடம் அவர் எதிர்பார்த்தபடி கிடைக்கவில்லை போலிருக்கிறது. அவரிடமிருக்கும் கோபம் இங்கு தாக்க சந்தர்ப்பம் கிடைத்தது போலிருக்கிறது. அப்படி நம் கவர்ன்மெண்டு பாரபக்டும் நினைக்குமா? ஒருக்காலும் நினைக்க மாட்டார்கள். மிஸ்டர் பாத்ரோ கற்றறிந்த விவேகியாச்சே அவரை அறியாது வெளி வந்திருக்கும் வார்த்தையிலிருந்து ஏழைகளுக்கு பூறு தள்ளவும் தன் அபிமான ஜில்லாவுக்கு 50 வீதம் தள்ளவும் சுய அக்கரையில் சொன்னதாயினும் கஷ்டநஷ்டங்கள் நேர்ந்திருக்கிறதென்பது உண்மையாகவே ஏற்படுகிறதல்லவா.

"கவர்ன்மெண்டாருக்கு இந்த ஹவுசில் இம்மாதிரி தெரிவித்துதான் அறிய வேண்டியது போலிருக்கிறது. இந்த பாலிசியை நான் ஒத்துக்கொள்ளவில்லை. ஒவ்வொரு ஜில்லா அதிகாரிகளாலும் எல்லா சமாசாரங்களும் அப்போதக்கப்போது தெரிந்தே வருகிறார்கள். ஆனால் இந்திய அதிகாரிகளையிருப்பவர்கள் துணிவாக கவர்ன்மெண்டுக்கு விருத்தமானவைகளை எதார்த்தத்தை தெரிவிக்க மாட்டார்கள். ஐரோப்பிய அதிகாரிகள் அவர்கள் சானிடேரியத்துக்கு போயிருந்தாலன்றி நேரில் டவுன்களில் கிராமங்களில் உள்ள கஷ்ட நஷ்டங்களை பார்த்திருந்தால் எதார்த்தத்தையே தெரிவிப்பார்கள்.

"இந்த ஹவுசானது மிஸ்டர் லாங்லி துரையை அறிந்திருப்பதானது கொஞ்சம் அதிர்ஷ்டமே. ஏழை ஜனங்களுடனும் கிராமங்களுடனையும் நன்றாய் பழகும் படியான முயற்சியிலுள்ளவராதலால் அவர் எதையும் மறைக்காமலே சொல்ல வேண்டியிருந்தது. நமது ருஜாங்க பிரதிநிதிகளோ அவ்விதம் பழகுவதற்கு எந்த சந்தர்ப்பத்திலும் இடம் கொடுப்பதில்லை. அவர்கள் சிநேகமும் கஷ்டம் தெரியாத முடியாத கணவான்களுடனே பழகுவதால் அவர்கள் அறிய முடியாதவர்களாய் விரிகிறார்கள். முற்காலத்திய கர்நாடக ருஜாக்கள் பிரஜைகளிடம் வைத்துள்ள எண்ணமும் அவர்கள் நடத்திய முறையும் தெரியாத விஷயமா? இரவுகளில் சென்று உலக வார்த்தைகளை எதார்த்தம் அறிந்து பாதுகாத்து வந்திருக்கிறார்கள். நம் ருஜாங்கம் அதி புத்திசாலிகளானதாலும் இவர்கள் வியாபார முறையுள்ள ருஜாங்கமாகச்சே எதிரிகள் எமாந்தார்கள் என்பதை சுமத்த யோசனையுள்ளவர்கள்.

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“பைனுன்சு கமிட்டியார் கவர்ன்மெண்டு 12½ பெர்சன்ட் சொன்னதை கவனியாது 18½ பெர்சன்ட் சிபார்சி செய்தார்கள். இதைக் கூட அங்கீகரிக்காதது போல இரண்டு தினங்களாக இந்த ஹவுசில் எல்லா கனவான்களையும் இதே விஷயத்தை பேசும்படி பார்த்து வருகிறார்கள்.

“இம்மாதிரி சந்தர்ப்பம் எப்போது கிடைக்கும். உலக முழுதும் கஷ்டத்தை அடைகிறது என்பது நன்றாய் அறிந்த கவர்ன்மெண்டார் இதில் பிசு செய்ய யோசிக்கலாமா? அத்தகைய காரியமா? முந்திய செட்டில்மெண்டு விஷயமாயும் வஜாவுக்கு உரிய நியாயத்தையும் முந்திய நவம்பர் மாத மீட்டிங்கில் நான் விரிவாய் சொல்லியிருக்கிறேன். இந்த மீட்டிங்கு தள்ளிவைத்த பிறகு நேர்ந்திருக்கிற விபரீதமான புகம்பம் வெள்ளம் அதிக மழை புயல்காற்றுகளையும் அதனால் உள்ள கெடுதியும் அறிகிறீர்கள்.

“எங்கள் ஜில்லாவைப்பற்றி சிறிது சொல்லுகிறேன். காஸத்தில் மழை யில்லாதும் வெள்ளத்தினால் இருக்கையிலுள்ள எவ்வளவு தோட்டங்களையும் உயர்ந்த மரங்களையும் பாழாக்கின. விளைந்த கதுருகள் அறுவடை செய்யமுடியாது சேற்றுக்குள் அழுந்தி முளைத்துவிட்டன. ஆனாரபிள் ரிவின்பூ மெம்பர் இதை பார்த்திருப்பார்களா?

“இப்போது வஜா கேட்பதானது சாஸ்வத வஜாவா? இது ஒரு சட்டத்தையும் திருத்தவதான் முறையா? கவர்ன்மெண்டார் மார்க்கட்டுகளை சரியான முறையில் வைக்கமுடியாதிருக்கையில் சஸ்வரலை கட்டாக்கிக்கும்வரை தாக்காலமாக விரும்பிவைக்க. இதை ஒரு பொருட்டாக பாராட்டலாமா?

“ருஜாக்களுடைய சேஷமும் சொத்தும் பிரஜைகளே. பிரஜைகளுக்கு சேஷமும் சொத்தும் ருஜாக்களே. வேண்டிய அளவு போதுமான பொருளை தேடுவது தான் நல்ல ருஜாங்க முறைமை என்பது பெரியோர்கள் கருத்து. இந்தியா கவர்ன்மெண்டுக்கு செலுத்த வேண்டியதை முன்னாடியே செலுத்தியது போக இப்போது சுமார் இரண்டரை கோடி மிகுதி யிருக்கும்போது அதை பிரஜைகளுக்கு கஷ்டத்துக்கு பகிர்ந்து கொடுப்பதில் யோஜிப்பது பொருந்தாது.

“விளைபொருள் விவவாசி யேறி இருக்கும்போது மூன்றரை கோடியாயிருந்த சம்பளத்தை 6½ கோடி ஆக்கிவிட்டீர்களே! அந்த எண்ணத்தையும் பரபரப்பையும் இந்த சமயம் யோசித்து பாருங்கள். மிகுதி பணத்தை கவர்ன்மெண்டார் என்ன செய்கிறது? சிறிசிலர்களே பிழைக்கும் வழியில் புகுத்துவிடுவீர்கள். எந்த ஸ்கீமும் செய்ய இந்த சமயம் தேவையா?

“எல்லா டிரேடும் கெடுதலாயிருக்கிறது. வியாபாரிகளோர் படுந்துயரம் ரொம்ப. இதற்காக இன்கம்டாக்ஸ் முதலியதை குறைக்க இந்தியா கவுன்சிலுக்கு சிபார்சுக்கு இங்கு பிரச்சனையில்லை. பெருமையும் தயாள குணமுடைய ஹானரபிள் பைனுன்சு மெம்பர் ஸ்டோக்ஸ் அவர்களும் ஹானரபிள் ரிவின்பூ மெம்பர் சர் ஆர்கிபால்டு காம்பெல் துரை அவர்களும் இந்த சமயம் ஜெனரலாக அவர்கள் அபிப்பிராயத்தை காட்டுவதானது எத்தெய்வமும் அவர்களை புகழாதிருக்குமா? கவர்ன்மெண்டாரை கட்டாயப்படுத்த ஒரு அதிகாரமும் நியாயமும் இல்லை. கெஞ்சி தயவாக யாசகமாகத்தான் கேட்கலாம்.

“நாமெல்லாம் அவரது குழந்தைகள். பசி வந்தவுடன் கத்துவோம். நமது தாய் நல்ல தித்திப்பான விலையுள்ள அமுர்த்தத்தை கொடுக்கும். பசி தீர்ந்ததும் அந்த அமுர்த்தத்தின் மதிப்பை அறியாது தள்ளிவிடும். அதை தாய்மார்கள் எடுத்து பந்தோபஸ்தே செய்வார்கள்.

“குழந்தைகள் கதறுவதை தாயாயுள்ள கவர்ன்மெண்டு கோபிக்குமா? நம் பசியை சொல்ல சலிக்கையுண்டு.

“எனக்கு சொந்தம் இராமநாதபுரம், மதுரை ஜில்லா. இதின் அக்கரைக்கு நான் சொல்லவில்லை. எல்லா கனவான்களும் அவரவர்கள் ஜில்லாவையே குறிப்பிட்டார்கள். எப்படி கற்பத்துக்குரியது தாயாருக்குமோ அவ்விதம் கஷ்டமானதும் மார்கட்டும் பணக்கஷ்டமும் சில இடத்துக்கு மட்டும் எப்படி இருக்கும். ஆதலால் மேற்படி இரண்டு ஜில்லாவுக்காக நான் விரும்பவில்லை. அதை

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நண்பர்கள் வித்தியாசமாக அக்கரையாக நினைத்தால் அந்த ஜில்லாவைச் சார்ந்த கனவானும் இங்கு இருக்கிறார். அந்த ஜில்லாவின் சேகமத்துக்கு வெளியில் சொல்லாவிடையும் உள்வயணமாக சொல்லத்தான் இருக்கும். ஹானரபிள் மெம்பர் பாத்ரோ அவர்கள் ஜனங்கள் திருப்திக்கு பேசுகிறார்களென்றார். இது அப்படியல்ல. நான் அதைப்பற்றி பிறுத்திக்கவில்லை. அதை நேரில் ஆண்டு வந்த ஸ்ரீ மீனாட்சி தாய் இருக்கிறார். அவர்களிடம் உண்மையாய் முறையிடுகிறவர்களையும் அந்த ஜில்லாக்களையும் அவள் பாதுகாப்பில் இருக்கிறதென்பதிலும் அவள் எப்படியும் ரகிப்பாள் என்பதிலும் சந்தேகமில்லை. ஆனதால் முன் வருஷத்திய மாதிரி சில ஜில்லாக்களை யோஜிக்கப்படாது. லாண்டு ரிவீன்யூ வானது அப்டிமிஸ்ட்ரேட்டிவ் உபயோகத்துக்காக புன்சை நன்சை என்றும், ஒருபோகம் இருபோகம் என்றும், குயிட் ரெண்டு என்றும் தண்ணீர் தீர்வை என்றும், அயன் இலும் ஜமீன் கிராமமென்றும் வைத்துள்ளதே. எல்லாம் நில வருமானமே. முன்வருஷ மாதிரி சுவான்மெண்டார் பிறப்புவித்த உத்திரவில் சில இளக்கான பதங்களை உபயோகிக்காது நன்சை புன்சை என்ற வித்தியாசமின்றி எல்லாவித ரிவீன்யூவுக்கும் இந்த பிராவினசு பூறுவுக்கும் வஜா செய்ய வேணுமாயும் பைனான்சு கமிட்டியார் சொல்லியுள்ள 18½ பர்செண்டுக்குமேல் சொல்ப வித்தியாசமா யிருப்பதால் பிரஜைகள் சேகமத்தை கருதி 100-க்கு 25 வீதம் வஜா செய்து உதவி புரிவது பொருத்தமாயிருக்கு மாதலாலும் அவ்விதம் செய்யவேணுமாயும் பிரார்த்திக்கிறேன்.

* Mr. M. S. SRESHTA:—"Mr. President, Sir, this resolution has been very exhaustively discussed and I do not wish to say many words on the subject. I believe there is a feeling on the Government side that the agitation for remission is more or less put up and that we, Members of the Council, are agitating for remission and reduction of tax because otherwise we may not be re-elected at the next election. I may assure the Government Members that this is not the fact. The feeling for a reduction of tax is widespread. I quite realize the difficulties of the hon. the Finance Member. I have personal experience of the manner in which he is trying to balance the budget and I know he has many difficulties to face and he has exercised great patience and ability in balancing the budget. Difficulties, no doubt, there are. But all the same, it must be remembered that the case of the ryot is a very difficult one. It is perhaps thought that we are trying to benefit not the actual ryot, but the middleman. I should like to disabuse the hon. the Revenue Member, that it is not so. The prosperity of the country is bound up with the prosperity of the ryot. Unless we help the ryot, it will not be possible to increase the prosperity of the country. What the hon. the Finance Member feels is that it will not be possible to meet the wishes of the Council without trenching on the reserve fund. What I feel is that there is a good case made out for trenching on the reserve fund. As Mr. T. S. Ramaswami Ayyar pointed out, the reserve was fixed at a time when the financial position of the country was not so sound. But now, the reserve might be trenched upon without any disaster to the country. Another reason why we should not have such a large reserve is this. I think there will not be incentive for more economies. I am very much against the pay cut. I think salaries of Government servants should not be reduced. But, if the alternative is that the assessment is not to be reduced, then I will say the pay must be cut. There must be not a uniform cut, but a graded cut. I think it

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is almost a scandal that salaries in this country are very high. I mean the salaries of higher officials. If you look at salaries in Japan, you will be surprised to see what low salaries are given there. In the case of Europeans who come here, it may be justified. But, there is no justification for our fellow countrymen being paid high salaries at the present moment. I now come to the question of how to reduce the cost of administration which is scandalously high. How is it to be reduced? Is it to be reduced by reducing salaries? I think not, Sir. I think the staff should be reduced. The number of clerks and the number of peons, I think, are far too many. If the staff is reduced by 10 per cent, still the work of the administration can be carried on. I am sure that, besides the salaries and staff, there are various other means of reducing the cost. If the head of a department pays a surprise visit to his office he would see how many people are working. These reductions can be effected without any damage to efficiency. All these matters in any case deserve the consideration of the Government. The Finance Committee, I believe, constituted itself into a Retrenchment Committee and it went into various matters. I did not see the report. I do not know whether it went into the question of reduction of staff and the reduction of leave concessions and so on. If it has not been done and even if it has been done, let it be reconsidered. Mr. Tottenham made valuable suggestions. I do not know if they are kept in mind. Not only is the staff overmanned as a rule—it is undermanned in certain cases—but there is no delegation of duties. If you want anything to be done, the officer says: 'I have no power or he says, 'It is with another officer. Another man has to sign it.' This kind of work is a disgrace to the administration. It is extremely expensive. When Government say they cannot balance the budget, they must go and see how the delegation of duties can be increased and expenditure reduced. I would ask the Members here if they do not find considerable difficulty in drawing their travelling allowance. I have been agitating for this for the past two years. We have got to wait sometimes 48 hours to get our travelling allowance. One clerk says 'I have got the papers here. But I have got to get money from somebody else.' The Accountant-General's clerk says, 'The paper has not come to me and as soon as it comes to me, I will deal with it.' Every Member of Council knows about this. I should like to know why this is tolerated even in this Council. The Secretary of the department is also here, and I hope he will take up this matter and see that this abuse is removed. The time of the clerk is wasted and our own time is wasted. If there is any doubt in the mind of the Secretary, let it be removed now and here. I should like to know whether any Member of Council would contradict me about this delay. There are various directions in which the cost of administration could be diminished by removing all the overlapping and by concentrating work in certain persons only.

"The next point is, Sir, that we should exploit all possible sources of revenue. I should take up another question, namely, the question

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of Excise. It is a very large source of revenue. We know a large amount of money goes out of this country because of liquor. If good liquor is made here, a good deal of money can be saved here. I was told by Mr. Wright, the head of Messrs. Parry & Co., that it is quite possible to improve the quality of liquor here. That is a source, which ought to be exploited, to see whether an increase in revenue could not be derived by improving the quality of the liquor. Instead of the money going to foreign countries, let that money come to us.

"Then, I come to another question. That is the question of the method of collection of land revenue. I do not know how far I am right in saying that the cost of collection of land revenue is about 30 per cent. I understand that this question was considered by the Madras Government and it was found that it was 20 per cent and not 30 per cent. Is it not possible to devise some method of collecting land revenue which will be cheaper? Is it not possible to tax agricultural incomes as is done in Australia? Possibly, in that event there will not be so much leakage of expenditure. This point is a very important one and I know it will not be decided during this financial year. This might be kept in mind. A Committee might be immediately appointed to consider how land revenue might be collected with less expenditure.

"Having regard to the possibility of increase in the revenue and diminishing expenditure, I think Government will take courage in their hands and grant us the concession which is asked for by the Council as a body. We, Members of Council, are responsible people. We are responsible to the people. We say that it is desirable that Government should accede to our request. If they agree to our wishes, there will be considerable incentive to increase the revenue."

At this stage the House rose for lunch.

After Lunch (2-30 p.m.).

Mr. M. A. MANIKKAVELU NAYAKAR:—"Mr. President, if I now rise to speak on this motion, it is not because that I can give any further information regarding the sad plight of the ryots or because I can describe more graphically the hopeless condition of the ryots, but it is only to show that my silence should not be taken to mean that I have no interest in about 80 per cent of the population of our Province. Sir, it cannot be denied that we are passing through a very acute economic depression. It has been conceded even by the Government in the Press Communiqué which they have issued that the prices are very low. The fall has not yet been arrested but on the other hand it tends to go down further. The very fact that the Government came forward to give relief at least to a small extent shows that there is something abnormal, in the conditions obtaining in the Presidency. The relief now asked for is no doubt a temporary one for meeting the present abnormal conditions; the other and bigger question of the

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relationship between the Government and the ryots and the policy of the Government in the matter of resettlement remain to be settled. It has been suggested by certain hon. Members who spoke before me that this sort of relief can only be a temporary thing. That is no doubt true, and the Government sooner or later will have to go into the question of settling the relations between themselves and the ryots.

"I think their theory of fixing the assessment is to allow for the cost of cultivation and take about 50 per cent of the net profit. In theory it is no doubt all right, but when it is worked out in practice, they take a much larger percentage than 50 per cent. In calculating the expenses of cultivation such as the cost of seed and labour a very low rate is fixed and the actual amount the ryot has got to pay for seeds and the cost of the labour that he contributes are not properly taken note of. For instance, a farmer works in the field with all the members of his family, and no labour charges are deducted for that by the settlement parties. It does not stop with that. Even when the farmer engages labour and cultivates his lands, the average labour charges are not deducted. The Government arbitrarily fix a certain amount for cultivation expenses. They ignore the standard labour wages. Though this is a question with which we are not immediately concerned, it is a thing which will have to be settled sooner or later either by this Government or by the Government that is to come.

"Sir, as far as I can see, the main objection on the part of the Government to give a large amount by way of relief is that it will mean a bigger loss in their income. My answer to that is that, if the Government has a will to carry out the policy of giving relief to the ryots and if they want to abide by the public opinion expressed outside this House and also by the sentiments expressed in this House, they can find a way to meet this fall in their income. Sir, a 25 per cent relief to the ryots will amount to about $1\frac{1}{2}$ crores. This amount could be easily found by imposing a cut on the salaries of Government employees and by applying the pruning knife to the expenditure on the General Administration of this Province. Sir, with regard to the salary cut the Government can very well adopt a graduated cut so as to give them a saving of at least Rs. 40 lakhs in the expenditure on account of salaries in this Province. Sir, if there is any class of persons that are not at all affected by this economic depression, it is the Government employees. Every profession, every business and every industry has been affected by the depression, but the Government employees are quite all right. They are not only not affected by the depression, but they gain by about 35 per cent or so on account of this fall in prices. In fact, they are growing fat by this economic depression which has affected all others except themselves.

"Then, with regard to the cutting down of expenditure under General Administration, the Government have effected a saving of one

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crore of rupees already by the efforts of the Retrenchment Committee. But I think there is still scope for saving at least $\frac{1}{2}$ a crore more under the expenses connected with General Administration. The other source from which they can find funds is the reserve balances. Now the Government have fixed that at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ crores of rupees should be the standing balance at the disposal of the Government. I do not see any reason why they should maintain that balance even at this critical juncture when we are faced with such acute economic depression. Abnormal conditions should be met by abnormal measures and I would suggest to them to take away 50 lakhs from their reserve balances and utilize that sum for giving this extraordinary relief claimed on behalf of the ryots. No doubt it would not be a recurring saving. It will be available only once. But we can have recurring savings from the salary cut and retrenchment in other directions. In all it will give a recurring saving of about a crore of rupees and a non-recurring saving which will be available for the current year of Rs. 50 lakhs. The reserve balance will then be about 75 lakhs of rupees.

"Sir, in this connexion I want to refer just for a minute to the recommendations of the Finance Committee. It should not be understood, Sir, that the Finance Committee recommended what they did recommend as the maximum. No higher figure could be fixed because then the recommendation would not have been unanimous. Individual Members were for recommending 25 per cent relief, but, in order to put forth a united front, we agreed to have the very modest recommendation which entailed to the Government a loss of Rs. 72 lakhs in their income from land revenue. The Government very cleverly adopted every item of recommendation which was made by the Finance Committee except one—an important one which would have meant an expenditure of about 12 lakhs of rupees. By not giving effect to the $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent relief to the resettled districts, the Government have been able to retain in their hands a sum of Rs. 12 lakhs. Then they came out with a communiqué saying that substantially they have carried out the recommendations of the Finance Committee. That may be so in theory, but practically they have not given effect, in spirit, to the modest recommendations of the Finance Committee for relief.

"Sir, in granting relief to the ryots, they may also bear in mind the need of giving greater relief to the pattadars paying Rs. 10 and less. I cannot, however, agree with the hon. Member who said that the entire kist should be written off in the case of small pattadars and that no relief should be given to the bigger pattadars. Bigger pattadars also stand in need of relief, but only they do not require relief to such a large extent as the smaller pattadars. If 10 per cent or $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent relief is given to the bigger landholders, 25 per cent relief may be given to the smaller pattadars or persons paying a kist of Rs. 10 and less.

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"In conclusion, I just want to say one word about my own district and that not with a view to seek any special treatment for it at the hands of the Government. I want to point out the unfairness with which my district has been treated. Resettlement took place in my district in the year 1912-13 when the level of prices was fairly high and I understand—if I am wrong the hon. the Revenue Member will correct me—the settlement officer recommended an increase of about 18½ per cent, the Board of Revenue fixed it at 20 per cent or 21½ per cent while the Government fixed it at the high rate of 25 per cent. When that is the case, when the assessment has been increased by 25 per cent in my district, it deserves special treatment. I urge that just before the outbreak of the war when prices were very high settlement in my district took place and there was an increase of 25 per cent in the assessment, and so it deserves a greater amount of relief."

2-45 * Khan Bahadur YAHYA ALI SAHIB Bahadur:—"Mr. President, Sir, I
p.m. wish to confine myself to one or two aspects of the matter, because the remaining aspects of the question have been discussed threadbare on the floor of this House. There has already been a full dress discussion on the various aspects of this question and therefore I do not wish to repeat what has already been said. The one point I wish to emphasize at the outset is that it seems to me that the budgetary situation is not so gloomy as has been sought to be represented by the Government. In the note circulated to the Finance Committee, which has been placed on the Table of this House to-day some of the figures set out there are very encouraging. I find, Sir, in the note stated that the accumulated revenue balance at the end of the year 1934-35 is expected to stand at 223.68 lakhs without providing for Part II schemes. Out of this sum, Government proceed to say that at least 125 lakhs should be always retained as the minimum reserve fund against all possible emergencies. I should like to know from Government whether there is any greater emergency than the present one. Then Government proceed to say that the excess over this minimum amount is 98.68 lakhs. I venture to think that that large figure is rather a luxury, especially in times of emergencies like the present one. Though I do not pretend to be a financier in any sense of that term and though I do not possess the superior merit of an expert like the hon. Member in charge of that port folio who adorns the Treasury Bench, I at the same time feel that a sum of 50 lakhs ought to be a perfectly reasonable sum sufficient to meet cases of emergencies and the remaining balance can conveniently be set apart to be utilized for nation-building purposes.

"Then again, Sir, the note proceeds to say, that out of this sum a certain amount has to be earmarked for Part II Schemes. In connexion with the general discussion on the Budget last year it was mentioned by me as well as by other hon. Members that the policy adopted by the Madras Government of spending on Capital Works money from the ordinary revenues is financially unsound. I find the figure of 40 lakhs as having been provided, during the current year, to be spent on Capital

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Works out of the ordinary revenue. If this amount is spared, then it can be utilized to make good the loss in land revenue this year.

“ Then again, Sir, I am glad to see that the Government have now decided to confine expenditure on Part II Schemes to 20 lakhs, and not only that, this expenditure is to be met not from the ordinary revenues but from the balances. Therefore, Sir, so far as I can envisage the financial position of the Province on the 31st March 1934, there will be a balance of about 2 crores. Hence I venture to say that the argument that the financial position of the Government is really an obstacle in the matter of granting the request of this House is baseless. Now after all, what does the present resolution mean? Here, I am only echoing what has already been said by my hon. Friend, Mr. Pannirselvam, who told the House how some of us on this side of the House have been constrained to support this resolution, because there is no other proposition which the Government are prepared to accept. Now, Sir, if Government would only accept the recommendations of the Finance Committee, probably myself and members belonging to my party would not support this resolution. And after all, may I for one moment ask the Government to ponder over what the commitments of the Finance Committee's resolution would involve? As it is, I believe, the difference comes to twelve to fifteen lakhs. In view of the figures I have already quoted with reference to the general financial position, I fail to see what real difficulty there is in the way of Government accepting the revised suggestions of the Finance Committee. I do not wish to labour that point any further.

“ Government have admitted the economic condition in the country in this very note; for they say ‘ The general trend of the prices of agricultural produce has been and is still downward. The downward trend is not always marked; but it is present everywhere. The prices of commodities generally show no particular inclination to fall much, if at all, below the appreciably lower level to which they had already fallen before the prices of agricultural produce began to slump. The value of land has fallen appreciably. It is difficult for persons dependent on land to secure advances from co-operative societies and their indebtedness to the societies is increasing appreciably owing to the difficulty which the societies have in collecting their outstandings.’ Besides this we know how many insolvency petitions and how many distresses against personal property we come across in our courts of justice every day nowadays. From this it is clear that the situation is very hard and so it is but proper that Government should agree to go one step further beyond what they have already done and satisfy the united and legitimate demand that has been now so earnestly voiced on the floor of this House.

“ It has become a convention in this House to say a word about the district to which one belongs before winding up, and so I wish to occupy the House on that matter for a few minutes. Unfortunately in giving remission, a distinction is made between districts where resettlement operations were carried out before the year 1918-19 and those where resettlement was carried out since then. I submit this distinction is not fair;

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for every district has been equally hard hit, and therefore there is absolutely no justification whatsoever to draw that distinction. Now with reference to the level of prices prevailing in my district what is said in this note applies *mutatis mutandis* to my district just as much as to any other district. In addition to this there has recently been a cyclone, and the havoc wrought by it has been seen by the hon. Revenue Member during his recent tour. Needless to say that the cyclone resulted in breaching the biggest reservoir in the district, and a column of 7 feet of water escaped devastating the neighbouring lands and gardens and causing enormous loss to the ryots. I therefore pray Government to consider all these things and treat my district with special consideration and grant the relief asked for, as in the existing conditions the meagre relief available under the remission provisions of the Board's Standing Orders is utterly inadequate."

* Rao Bahadur T. M. NARAYANASWAMI PILLAI:—" Mr. President, Sir, I rise to support the motion under discussion. If I rise to speak, it is not because I feel I have anything valuable to contribute, but because I feel I ought to associate myself with what has been said on this matter. Sir, I have read the communiqué of the Government, and I find that it tacitly admits the position which we are all contending for. We say that the prices have fallen; and that it is unjust to maintain and take from us the present high land tax. Now they say that there is a steep speedy fall in prices and therefore even according to them the present level of price does not justify the taking from us the present high rate of tax. Then what is it that justifies the demand at the present time? So far as this question is concerned, really I find no reason adduced in this communiqué. What they seem to say amounts to this. 'We cannot grant you funds for Part II schemes without this extra taxation. If you want your Part II schemes you must vote for this taxation. If you want land revenue to be reduced, then you will have to forego your Part II schemes. You cannot have both things simultaneously, because it is impossible to grant both. Therefore behave like good boys.' Now, Sir, if it is a question of an alternative between having Part II schemes and the grant of remission, I shall unhesitatingly prefer at this moment remission. I cannot look with equanimity upon the Part II schemes being carried out, while the people are groaning under the weight of a high level of taxation. Again, if Government are unable to accede to 25 per cent remission, why can't they grant 20 per cent or 18½ per cent remission as unanimously recommended by the Finance Committee? It cannot be contended that the financial position, does not warrant a remission of this kind. I have been a Member of the Retrenchment Committee in 1931-32, and I know the hon. Finance Member. He has a good head and a large heart; and it is not impossible for him to devise ways and means without touching the accumulated surplus. Further, I for one, will certainly prefer the desirability of enforcing a salary cut at this juncture. I am not speaking in a spectacular way. I certainly do want Government to respect the sacred obligations which they owe to

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their servants. But in doing so I want them to take into account the peculiar financial position of the present day agriculturist. Last year when I stated that there is a general fall in prices, the hon. the Revenue Secretary wished that I referred to certain facts. Subsequent to that the hon. the Revenue Member himself had been on a tour in my district and on that occasion the Deputy Registrar had been collecting statistics from the records under the control of the farms run by the Government department itself; the co-operative societies submitted accounts before the Registrar in this behalf, and these were submitted to the hon. the Revenue Member, and we thought that we had convinced him that the present level of prices does not justify the taking of this rate of tax.

“Therefore, Sir, if this steep fall is admitted, really there is no ground to refuse this demand. The present demand is quite a modest one. Certainly we have taken into consideration the difficulties of the Government. It is not as if we are unmindful of their difficulties. There are times when Government have to put up with certain difficulties. Our Province will not become bankrupt if they resort to this method. So, the Government will be well advised in accepting the recommendation of the Finance Committee and give the remission they suggested. 3 p.m.

“There are two points with regard to the order of the Government. One is the distinction which is made between dry lands and wet lands. In the present order the dry lands get a lower rate of remission. There is no justification for it. Last year they gave a uniform remission outright to all lands including the dry lands; at present that rate is reduced to $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The owners of dry lands are at present placed in a more disadvantageous position. There is no justification for the Government to do so. The second point is that the rate fixed by the Government is $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent at the most. I feel this is inadequate. We desire that a remission of not less than 25 per cent is called for at present.”

* AHMED MIRAN SAHIB Bahādur:—“Mr. President, Sir, I heartily associate myself with the supporters of this resolution. In doing so I should like to say a few words.

“Hon. Members of the House are aware that next to the Coleroon tract, where an increase of 30 per cent was levied, Tinnevely district is the most highly assessed district in the whole Presidency. The fall of prices of both wet and dry grains is also abnormal in that district. For the last six years, as has been admitted by the Government, the prices have been on the downward march and there are not the least signs of any recovery. No one can say whether the climax has been reached at all. The resolution before the Council, I submit, suggests only a modest remission of 25 per cent, though the state of things which obtain in the district of Tinnevely and other districts justify even 50 per cent remission of land revenue. But that is not the demand before the Government. The commutation rates, on the basis of which the enhancement of 21 per cent was made, are now proved to be fatal to the interest of poor ryots. Cultivation has long ago ceased to be a profitable occupation. If the cultivators

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are still hanging on to the lands it is not because of their choice but because it is the occupation of their forefathers handed down to them from generation to generation. Five years ago the rural indebtedness of the ryots was appalling and the economic depression has aggravated the condition to an extent beyond description. The Government have admitted that the suffering of the people throughout all the districts is uniform and that leaving a few exceptions the enhanced rate of assessment also does not exceed 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. That being the case, it is not intelligible why Government should make distinction between the districts, settled in and after 1918-19 and the remaining districts. Such distinctions are invidious and would cause greater discontent. I would therefore urge that the rate of remission should be uniform in all the districts. When the ryots want an immediate and substantial relief in the shape of remission, what purpose would it serve them if the Government were to deliver a sermon on the principles and methods of settlement? The acute situation has brought to the forefront the injustice of periodical settlements and the necessity for placing the land revenue system on a legislative basis; but the Government in their communiqué have not chosen to deal with these points but have only dilated upon the 'usual' and unconvincing arguments of the cutting off of grants to the nation-building departments. It is true that large sums of money are spent year after year for the Industrial and Agricultural developments but can the Government deny that most of the money is consumed by their own servants in the shape of salaries and allowances and that no real benefit is derived by the agriculturist who contributes more than one-third of the revenue to the Government? When the poor ryots cannot have the satisfaction of a single meal a day and more than a pair of clothes for the year, there are Government servants who are drawing fat salaries and leading a luxurious life. In their case, the purchasing power of the rupee has become doubled and trebled and they do not seem to be affected in the least by the economic depression around them. It is true that the Imperial Services are made to forego 5 per cent of their salaries but there is no reason why the Provincial Services should not also forego a similar percentage, if not more. The Finance Member has been accusing the Members of this House of irresponsibility and an absence of constructive suggestion. While refuting this baseless charge against the hon. Members, I challenge the Government to tell the House what constructive proposals they have themselves devised to afford relief to the suffering ryots. If they are sincere and earnest about protecting the ryots from utter ruination, let them accept the motion that may be moved some time hence suggesting a cut in the salaries of the Government employees. That is certainly a constructive suggestion for the Government to act upon.

"No doubt, it is the Reserved Half that is administering the Finance and the Revenue Departments of the Government. But one would like to know what exactly is the advice that has been tendered by the Transferred

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Half in the matter of relieving the distress of the ryots. The Ministers should have shown some ways and means to the Reserved Half to balance the Budget after affording adequate relief to the ryots. The Transferred Half commands a big majority behind it and their suggestions must have great weight and effect with the Reserved Half. If they have not already made themselves felt as they should have done, there is still time to regain their lost position.

“ It will not be enough if the Ministerialist Party or if many of them vote for this resolution, but it will be the duty of the Ministers to see that this resolution is carried into effect. If they are not able to do it, then they will have to confess their failure and make room for others.

“ With these words I strongly support the resolution and the various amendments moved thereto.”

Diwan Bahadur S. ELLAPPA CHETTIYAR:—“ The hon. Members of this House have described in detail the difficulties that are being experienced by the agriculturists of this Presidency in the matter of payment of land assessment on account of the low prices of paddy and other produce. I do not think it is necessary for me to add anything more. What they have said applies to Salem district also. If I want to say anything regarding Salem district, I can say that the agriculturists in that district are worse off than those in other districts. So I request the Government that, whatever remission they give to other districts, they must give the same to Salem district also.”

* Mr. K. S. SIVASUBRAHMANYA AYYAR:—“ Sir, if I rise to support this motion, it is not without a certain amount of hesitation, because I have to go against the mandate of my constituency. My constituency has asked me to move for a reduction of 33½ per cent. If I have not chosen to do so, it is only in order to secure unanimity on this resolution. Government in announcing the relief they have granted to the ryotwari population of this Presidency have published along with their communiqué an annexure in which they have attempted to elucidate the land revenue policy of the Government and also other factors which are usually considered by the Settlement Officer when he resettles a district. If you look into that communiqué, you will find there is nothing new or illuminating. All the points raised in the communiqué have been very ably dealt with by almost all Members who spoke before me in this House. Anyhow I would be failing in my duty if I did not refer to one or two points referred to in that communiqué. It is represented there that the price of a garisai of paddy is Rs. 143 and the Settlement Officer has proceeded on this assumption. When the resettlement was carried out in Tanjore, if the commutation rate of about Re. 1-1-3 or Rs. 143 per garce had been adopted in commuting the value of the whole outturn, there would have been absolutely no justification, I submit, for the enhancement of this 18½ per cent over the previous commutation rate of Re. 1-0-8. Secondly the Government themselves have realized the exact situation to which the ryotwari population of this Presidency has been reduced.

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They have stated in their communiqué that 'something has been done.' But here as representatives of the people we differ from them and say that it is not 'something that has been done,' but nothing has been done practically to make the ryot live even a hand-to-mouth living. If the same state of affairs is allowed to continue for some time more, I am afraid there would be no ryotwari population left and there would be no need for the Government to collect any revenue. It is stated in some quarters that the cry is generally raised from Tanjore. Let me not be misunderstood if I press the claim of Tanjore specially after the havoc caused by the cyclone and the recent unseasonal rains. It is the hardest affected district since it has the largest paddy-growing area and since it does not grow any other agricultural crop to any appreciable extent except perhaps a very small quantity of groundnut and coconut and that is why the cry has emanated from that district. The prices of these agricultural commodities have gone so low that the Government communiqué itself has admitted that fact. The argument that the nation-building departments will have to be starved if the remission of 25 per cent as suggested in this resolution is given effect to, cannot stand a moment's scrutiny. If the nation itself is going to be effaced from its existence for whom do the nation-building departments exist? I submit, as my hon. Friend, Mr. Narayanaswami Pillai, suggested, that I would certainly prefer not giving effect to Part II schemes in order to give a remission of 25 per cent in land revenue assessment to the ryotwari landholders to help them in their present distress.

3-15
p.m.

"There is no doubt that all these facts are in favour of the ryots. But whatever that may be, I appeal to the Government to view the situation with some imagination and sympathy. If only there is a will on the part of the Government to rescue the ryot population, there will certainly be a way and the way will be found very easily.

"Some hon. Members have suggested the imposition of a cut in salaries of Government servants with a view to giving relief to the ryotwari population. Our Province being mainly an agricultural one, the welfare of the people depends on the welfare of the agricultural population. Therefore giving relief to the agricultural population should have precedence over everything else. I think the claim of the agriculturists for relief is paramount and comes first and foremost before everything else. The rupee has appreciated in value by 30 to 40 per cent during the last three years and therefore the imposition of a cut of 5 or 10 per cent in salaries will not affect the loyal services. It also behoves the loyal services to give up a portion of the high salaries granted to them during the boom years, in order that some relief may be granted to the distressed agricultural population.

"In this connexion we have to note also what other Governments have done for their ryot population. In every instance, they have viewed the case of the agriculturists very sympathetically and granted the necessary relief. For example, the Legislative Council of the Central Provinces made a unanimous recommendation for a reduction of 25 per cent of the

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assessment. In the course of the debate, the hon. the Revenue Member of that Government observed that the assessment in that Province was considerably lower than the assessment in Madras. When a remission has been given even in a Province with such low pitch of assessment, have not the agriculturists of this Province a right to demand a more generous treatment at the hands of the Government? In Burma, where the cultivation expenses incurred are practically very little and where the rate of assessment is only 50 per cent of ours, the Government there also have granted a remission varying from 15 to 50 per cent. The Indian States too in several parts of India have not been lacking in sympathy. For instance, in Hyderabad, Travancore and Cochin and various other States, liberal remissions have been granted. The Raja Sahib of Bobbili—he is not here now in the House—has granted, I understand from the papers, a remission of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in his estate. Thus nobody seems to be lacking in sympathy in this matter. I am surprised to see, however, that our Government should view the matter so mercilessly. In the last fasli they were pleased to give a suspension of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, which they later on converted into a remission in the case of the districts resettled after 1918–19. When they granted a remission of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to the above resettled districts last year, is it just, I ask them, to grant the same amount this year also? Are not these districts at least entitled to a remission and not suspension of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent and an additional $9\frac{3}{4}$ per cent granted to districts settled before 1918 or 1919 especially when one lean year has followed another lean year? There seems to be some misunderstanding created somewhere by interested parties, it may be, that the agitation is kept up merely for political purposes and that only the big mirasidars and the money-lenders are going to be benefited by this remission and that it is not going to help the smaller pattadars at all. I cannot agree with this view. Even a small reduction, say a reduction of Rs. 2–8–0 for a pattadar who pays Rs. 10 is not a small thing and will be of great help to him. At a recent conference of the ryots of my district, it was urged that a reduction of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent as the irreducible minimum should be given and that the Legislative Council should press for it. At that conference, it was the smaller pattadars who pressed for this reduction and not the bigger pattadars and the money-lenders alone. The fact is that the money-lenders of yesterday are becoming the landholders of to-day and if things continue at this rate they in their turn will become paupers. Probably it is only a vicious circle and I do not know where it will lead us. In other ways too, the Government have been adding to the burdens of the ryot. For instance, the orders passed in G.Os. No. 474, dated 15th March 1933, No. 1853, dated 5th October 1932 and No. 1238, dated 14th July 1933, show that the Government have been anxious to undo the very settlement policy by means of executive orders to suit their convenience. They raise the classification of the irrigation sources, impose flat water-rates, enhance the second crop rates and other rates so that the revenue may be augmented by putting more and more burdens on the rate-payer. The Government have attempted in various ways to take away with one hand what has been

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given with another. I therefore appeal to the Government to cancel the orders I have referred to above forthwith. Lastly, Sir, I would appeal to the Government to remember the observation made by the Government of India regarding the land revenue policy. They have said: 'It is unwise to exact from impoverished persons a revenue which they really cannot pay, merely because they are under an engagement to pay it.'

"With these remarks, I appeal once more to the Government to view the case of the poor ryots with some imagination and sympathy, so that he may be allowed at least to live for some more time, even though it may be a hand-to-mouth existence."

* Rao Sahib V. I. MUNISWAMI PILLAI:—"Mr. President, this resolution has been before the Government and the public for the last two or three months and there has been a lot of agitation on this question. Therefore it is the duty of every one of us here to consider the question carefully before we go to vote on it. The Government on their part have been considering this question carefully and they have given their views in the communiqué issued by them as well as in the proceedings of the Finance Committee. If the resolution is given effect to, the Government fear that their balances will be shattered, they will not be able to balance their budget and they will have no money to carry on the Part II schemes. Unfortunately, I have to view this question from the point of view of how it will affect the depressed classes. For, when the Retrenchment Committee made retrenchments in expenditure, it was the Labour department that suffered greatly at their hands. The Committee abolished the post of Commissioner of Labour and reduced the grant of Rs. 2½ lakhs, set apart for the betterment of the depressed classes. This year also when the Finance Committee was considering Part II schemes I understand that they have already decided to cut off Rs. 75,000 from the amount that was set apart for the betterment of the depressed classes. If this resolution is passed, it will not be surprising if the Government cut off what little they have already allotted for this very important department which works for the betterment of the depressed classes. I would appeal to the Government and also the hon. Members of this House to devise means by which it will be possible to give this relief without abandoning such important Part II schemes as I have referred to. I myself went to some of the districts after the cyclone and I saw that the ryots have been hard hit by the devastating cyclone. As to the pros and cons of the resolution before the House, we have to think of some means by which this relief can be given and the Government left with enough money to carry on their administration. Some hon. Members have suggested a cut in the high salaries of Government servants and I too join with them in making this suggestion. There is a feeling in the minds of the public that this Government is paying its Provincial Services much larger salaries than other Provinces are paying theirs. The Government should take note of this feeling and do something so that some of the money that is being spent in this direction may be usefully diverted for the purpose of such important schemes as I have mentioned.

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“ Apart from that I know that Government have been wasting a lot of money on schemes known as public utility schemes. I have brought to the notice of Government some such schemes during previous years but they have taken no note of what I said. For instance, the Government spend a lot of money on their cinchona plantations on the Anamalais in spite of the fact that the plantations are not very successful. After all, the planters who are likely to take interest in the cinchona plantations ask for a guarantee and, if that is given, I do not think that a large amount of money should be spent from the coffers of the Government. 3-30 p.m.

“ Secondly, Sir, I know that much money is wasted in the experimental gardens in the Nilgiris; I mean the fruit gardens and the experimental seed farm. I know that the ryots can produce better seeds and can manage their cultivation better. If such schemes are weeded out, I am sure that we can find much money at a time like this. After all, the happiness of the ryots will be the happiness of the agricultural labour. I know as a matter of fact that it is the depressed classes that give the largest percentage of agricultural labour. The sad plight of some of the districts which have suffered of late will increase the disabilities of the depressed classes. So, I must appeal to the Government to come to some arrangement whereby they can accept the recommendations of the Finance Committee to tide over the difficulty.

“ Coming as I do from the Nilgiris, though my own district has not suffered by the recent cyclone, it has suffered very much owing to the abnormal weather conditions prevailing there. The ryots are suffering a great deal on account of the low price that is obtaining in our district for potatoes. The Government have not taken any steps to alleviate the distress caused by the importation of foreign potatoes into this land. Large quantities of foreign potatoes are being now imported to Madras. The price in my district for potatoes is so low that the agriculturist feels it very hard. Any remission in land revenue may not be very advantageous to my district. But in the interest of the depressed classes, I would request the Government to do something, so that the agriculturist may find some consolation in the remission of the land kist.”

Swami A. S. SAHAJANANDAM spoke in Tamil supporting the resolution.

* Mr. J. A. DAVIS:—“ Sir, though we are all in sympathy with the ryots, yet there are certain aspects of the matter which have not been touched upon. On the Nilgiris the operations of the Agricultural Department, side by side with the extended use of chemical manures, which is being used in potato cultivation on lands which were formerly cultivated with hardly any manure are resulting in the yield being increased by several fold with the result that the potato market is overstocked. The railway to some extent has come to the rescue with reduced rates of transport but this does not help sufficiently.

[Mr. J. A. Davis]

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“ Then again in distant Ootacamund the market is filled with Japanese rice. This rice is being brought into Madras in large quantities and though the matter has occupied the attention of the Assembly nothing so far has been done to stop its importation. It is therefore surprising that the ryot cannot secure a market for his paddy. It seems high time that the Madras Government took the matter up with the Government of India. The tea industry was in a bad way but tea planters have been far seeing and have resorted to voluntary restriction which is now legalized and which has proved their salvation. Surely, therefore, it is not too much to ask for early steps being taken to keep foreign rice out of the Indian market. Until some such relief is given it becomes incumbent upon us to support the resolution before the House.”

3-45
p.m.

Mrs. K. ALAMELUMANGATHAYARAMMA:—“ Mr. President, Sir, representatives of the various districts in this Council have expressed the hardship which both landlords and farmers feel in having to pay the usual kist assessment on their lands. I have no personal interest in the matter: but from what other Members in the Council have said and from what I have seen with my own eyes in the course of visits to various places down to Chidambaram, I can testify to the havoc caused by the recent cyclone in various places in South Arcot; even in Tanjore, places like Shiyali have been hard hit. This has all been published in Government Communiqués. I have seen how longstanding and deeply-rooted trees have been plucked as it were by the roots and laid flat on the ground. Even trees which still stand erect have been so shaken that their leaves seem to get no sap from the roots and are withered. Paddy, sugarcane and other crops have been ruined. Round about Cuddalore nearly 200 acres have been made unfit for cultivation by the salt water of the sea having come into the land. The soil will require nearly two years to be made fit again for cultivation. I pray that the Government should consider with sympathy the case of poor agriculturists who pay kist varying in amount between five and ten rupees. Owing to the fall in prices of food-grains during the past two years, even mirasidars are unable to dispose of their produce with any profit. This state of things is well described in the Tamil proverb ‘உழுதவன் கணக்குப்பார்த்தால் ஒழுகு கூட மிஞ்சாது.’ If one looks into the income and expenditure account farmer, one will see that not even a quarter of a measure of paddy is left for him. If such is the lot of independent agriculturists, it is needless to describe the helpless condition of their labourers. It is the duty of the Government to consider the hardship of both, capitalists and labourers, in this connexion and to give both of them the sorely needed relief in the shape of a reduction in the demands made upon them.”

Diwan Bahadur C. S. RATNASABHAPATI MUDALIYAR:—“ Mr. President, Sir, I wish to support the resolution now under discussion. The parties affected by this resolution, which if carried and if given effect to by the Government, are the ryots who are the mainstay of the State, the Government and also the Government servants, which term includes

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not only the higher-paid officers, but also those who are on low scales of pay. If you take the condition of the ryots who contribute to the coffers of the State, they again can be classified into three classes, viz., the poor classes of the ryots or the labourers, the middle classes of people and also the rich ryots. If you take the earnings of the labourers, they are very low; so also is the case of the middle class people. Their plight is indeed very very miserable. The condition of the rich people, one can say, is rather tolerably better than that of either the middle-class people or the labourers. When the conditions are such, I cannot understand why Government should be accumulating their finances to the detriment of the conditions of the poorer ryots. I am sure the Government, if only they have the will, can find some way to find the funds to give this concession on a greater scale to the ryots. If you take the period of the non-co-operation movement, the excise revenue was very unexpectedly cut down, and in spite of that, the Government managed to run the administration, and that most efficiently. I think the people who largely contribute to the coffers of the State are now in a much worse condition than they were at the time of the non-co-operation movement. When Government found it possible to run the Government in those days without resorting to any extraordinary retrenchment or cut in any direction, I consider that now it must be equally possible for the Government to agree to reduce their receipts from the poor ryots and thus help the people to a very great extent.

"I also wish to say a few words in connexion with the distinction that is sought to be made in the concession given as between the people owning wet lands and those owning dry lands. I am of opinion that the concession should apply in a greater measure to people who own dry and garden lands than to those who own wet lands. Wet lands are generally in the deltaic tracts and they are also owned by a better class of people. It is my opinion that the concession should apply in a greater measure to people who own dry lands and also garden lands. If only the Government instead of saying that 12½ per cent for wet lands and 6¼ per cent for dry lands alone would be given, say, condescend to give a concession of 25 per cent to dry lands, 18¾ per cent to garden lands and only 12½ per cent to wet lands, I think such a step will be very well appreciated by all the ryots in the Presidency.

"With these few words, Sir, I support the resolution."

* The hon. Sir ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL:—"Mr. President, Sir, I have been following the discussion with very great attention, and I am afraid in view of the considerable number of speeches made, it is not possible for me to reply individually to all the remarks of the hon. Members. Hon. Members quite naturally and quite rightly have spoken on this motion largely from the point of view of their own districts, and some have put forward special reasons, such as cyclones and floods, to explain why their own particular districts should receive better consideration than the other districts in the shape of a large measure

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of remission. Sir, we are not now concerned with any relief that should be given on account of cyclones and floods. There is provision already for such relief in our Board's Standing Orders. I think hon. Members are well acquainted with the fact that remissions and suspensions of revenue can be granted by our subordinate authorities; and even if they are not sufficient in the opinion of the local authorities, the standing orders provide for a special report being made to the Government. The terms of the note on this matter are very wide; and if I am allowed, I shall read it:

'If owing to the operation of causes other than those contemplated in this Standing Order, it should appear to the Collector that special measures of relief, whether by way of postponement of kist or otherwise, are required, he must at once submit a detailed report to the Board in order that the orders of Government may be obtained.'

That, Sir, covers cases which are not covered by the ordinary standing orders. Therefore I think that I need not take up the time of the House in discussing in any great detail what is to be done with reference to cyclones and floods. I may say that the Government are always ready to give relief in such cases. I may also remind the House that in 1930-31 when there were severe floods in the Tanjore district, the total remission that was given in that district amounted to nearly eleven lakhs of rupees. We had reports from our Collectors recently as regards the probable amounts of remission to be granted in certain districts on account of the seasonal mishaps such as floods and so forth, and the figure comes to nearly Rs. 4 lakhs. That includes the Ganjam district for which alone the figure is something just over Rs. 8,000, of which I believe something like Rs. 5,000 is to be allowed in the Goomsur division. I would therefore suggest, Sir, that it is not necessary to press the amendment suggested by my hon. Friend Mr. Patnaik that there should be a special 50 per cent remission in respect of the Goomsur division of the Ganjam district. The question of relief necessary on account of floods and other causes will be very carefully considered by the local officers. The figures which I have given, i.e., of nearly Rs. 4 lakhs which I just mentioned, do not include the figures for remission on account of cyclone in the last month, December, in the South Arcot, Tanjore and Trichinopoly districts, of which we have not yet received estimates.

"Sir, in some cases I think hon. Members have rather exaggerated their cases. Allegations have been made that agriculture is no more a remunerative occupation in this Presidency and other suggestions of that kind have been made. I may say, Sir, that exaggerations of that nature do not help the Government to arrive at a true and statesmanlike decision on the points at issue. I feel, however, that I must meet the points to some extent.

"It may interest hon. Members to know that during the period 1903-04 to the year 1931-32, holdings in this province increased from 23,100,000 acres to 27,700,000 acres, that is to say, an increase of 20 per cent in 28 years. It may be thought that this was entirely due to an increase in the area of dry lands; but it is interesting to know that

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the wet holdings increased by 21 per cent and the dry holdings by 19.6 per cent. In the same period, or very nearly in the same period of 30 years, i.e., 1901 to 1931, the population increased by 22.1 per cent. Now, Sir, at a time such as that which we have been passing through, we should naturally expect that lands on the margin of profitable cultivation would go out of occupation and that there would be a certain number—even a considerable number—of relinquishments. I therefore asked for figures showing the excess of relinquishments over darkhasts or applications for land. These figures as a matter of fact show that in fasli 1341, there was a net excess of land granted on darkhasts over land relinquished of 49,064 acres and in fasli 1342, there was a similar excess of 42,741 acres. Sir, I think those figures are very encouraging and do not support the view that agriculture is ceasing to be a remunerative occupation in this province."

Diwan Bahadur C. S. RATNASABHAPATI MUDALIYAR:—"What percentage is given to ex-army men?"

* The hon. Sir ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL:—"I cannot answer that question now. The relinquishments have not been very marked considering that millions of acres are under occupation in this province. The Government have recently published a Press Communiqué setting out the principles of the land revenue policy and dealing to some extent with the present situation. That has been mentioned by several hon. Members and in particular by Mr. Langley. He said that it showed that our land revenue ryotwari system has broken down; I should like to remind the House that not only our ryotwari system has been strained, but that the other systems such as the banking systems, the trading systems, the currencies, etc., of the various countries of the world have also given way or broken down under the great strain which has been placed upon them in the last two or three years. And because our ryotwari system has suffered a similar strain, that is no reason for condemning it wholeheartedly or failing to recognize the benefit it has conferred on this province during the past century. What we are here for to-day is to consider what measures, either temporary or permanent, could be adopted to meet the particular crisis which has now arisen, which can be expected to relieve the ryots of this province.

"We have to make, as has been done in the case of the other systems which have broken down, some special arrangements, either temporary or permanent, to meet the crisis that faces us at present. We have, last year—and this year we are adopting the same course—sanctioned certain suspensions, large suspensions I should say, of revenue which were not provided for under the normal working of the ryotwari system; this year we have also made substantial remissions outside our ordinary system. Now, Sir, Mr. Langley stated that we were doing what is quite impossible now, in demanding money, a commodity which they cannot produce under our ryotwari system, because money no longer exists. Sir, during the past two or three faslis, our land revenue has been paid almost as regularly as in previous years.

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" The balance left uncollected at the end of the last fasli was, if I remember rightly, 1.25 per cent of the demand and is slightly better than in the previous fasli. During the last month, i.e., in December, the collections amounted to 70.5 per cent of the current demand as opposed to 77.1 per cent in the previous December and 75.4 per cent in the December before that. I think that meets the allegation that there is no money. Indeed some hon. Members suggested that money is cheap, and there is plenty of money going and that Government should raise loans. It may be true no doubt that in some cases the ryots have to mortgage their land or jewels in order to raise money, but I believe, an ordinary way of saving money in this province is to invest it in land or to invest it in jewels, and certainly those who invested their money in gold have got a very good return for any gold they have now sold. That, Sir, is a method of putting funds aside against a rainy day such as the one from which the ryots are suffering at the present time. We are meeting temporarily their immediate difficulties by means of these suspensions and remissions. But I hope, hon. Members won't regard those as permanent measures of relief. It will mean a very considerable reduction of the resources at the disposal of the Governments of the future. That is a matter for very careful consideration by hon. Members of this House. It is very easy for my hon. Friend, the Finance Member, and myself to earn cheap popularity by giving large remissions of land revenue. We should not have to meet the difficulty in future, while endeavouring to balance the budget due to our having large remissions from one of the principal sources of revenue. Such remissions, if adopted, on those lines would be against all principles of land revenue though they might of course be acceptable to this House and to the country at present. The concessions which we propose to make are indeed more than are actually required if one considers simply the present prices as compared with the prices on which the present assessments are based. We have recognized that the standard of living has risen and the prices have fallen of some of the principal products especially paddy and that the ryots have difficulties in meeting other claims made on them. (Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar: 'Are present prices less than the commutation prices taken into account at the last settlement?') In some cases they are now less, but in many cases the remission that is proposed more than counterbalances the difference. The claims on the agriculturists are not merely the land revenue but also various other claims such as those of money-lenders from whom they have from time to time borrowed money not merely for the purpose of paying the assessment but for other purposes as well. We must therefore look for and find other remedies besides the remission or suspension of land revenue. Various suggestions have been made from time to time as for instance those made at the Economic Conference at Annamalaiagar the other day where this matter was very carefully discussed and suggestions were put forward. It was expected that a Bill dealing with Debt Conciliation would have been before this House by this time, but it has not been

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introduced. (Mr. P. V. Krishnayya Choudari: 'Why not Government take it up themselves?') Government will consider the suggestion of the hon. Member. In the Press Communiqué we gave examples of certain measures which might be adopted for relieving the ryot. One of the solutions for the present trouble will be found in the reorganization of trade and the consequent increase of prices which is likely to follow. We have put in our Press Communiqué a suggestion that the freights on railways might be reduced or other marketing facilities might be improved and that other crops might be substituted for paddy.

"Now, Sir, Mr. Langley referred to those suggestions with considerable contempt. Apparently he was under the impression that the Government had in view only the question of finding new markets for our paddy outside India. He pointed out that paddy is produced in numerous other countries. He evidently had in view only paddy or rice when he made his observations. There are, on the other hand, various other commodities as well as paddy. But, as regards paddy, I may point out that the Economic Enquiry Committee presided over by Mr. Vernon in 1931 found that as a matter of fact this Presidency, although it does export a certain amount of rice, for example, to Ceylon and Hyderabad, on the whole required more paddy for consumption than it produces. So, on the whole we are an importing country in respect of paddy and not an exporting country. That was the decision arrived at by that Committee. So, the question of finding exports for rice or paddy to new markets outside India is not a very pressing question, but what we do want is to improve our own internal marketing facilities and to get people to combine together to keep up prices; and we also want to improve the marketing facilities of other products besides paddy. These are matters which this Government in consultation with the Government of India are considering. The internal markets for paddy and rice cannot be said to be organized even in important distributing centres. The Government of India therefore propose to entertain an expert marketing officer and have suggested the formation of provincial marketing boards with provincial marketing officers. To this we have provisionally agreed and in the meantime the Madras Government will almost immediately employ an officer on special duty to examine the question in advance with special reference to the present harvest and marketing season. The trade at present is chaotic and have to concert measures for its improvement. The foreign market for paddy and rice is normally in Ceylon and that chiefly in the way of export of the superior quality of rice from Tanjore and its neighbourhood. The competitor in this market is Burma where the rice industry is well organized, its rice is more in demand now by reason of the reduced purchasing power of the Ceylon consumer. To meet the competition in this foreign market, we have in the first instance secured a reduction in railway freight on the South Indian Railway. This might have gone further if the Ceylon Government Railway had co-operated with us. The result has been an increase in the export of paddy and we hope that if the reduction in freight is continued, the

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export will increase still further. We have also applied for the opening of the Port of Tranquebar for the export of rice; this should benefit the exporters from the northern part of Tanjore. (Mr. P. V. Krishnayya Choudari: 'Were similar concessions given in other railways?') That is certainly a very good point made by the hon. Member, but as the hon. Member is aware railways are not under this Government and if any case is put up, I am sure this Government will support any such request for a reduction in freight. The Government of India have under consideration the suggestion made by this Government that special preference might be secured for Indian rice in the Ceylon market under the Ottawa Agreement. This would, I believe, operate against the rice of any other countries. We have subscribed to a suggestion that prohibitive duties should be imposed on rice from foreign countries and we addressed His Exalted Highness the Nizam's Government regarding the need for reducing their import duty on rice from the Circars which has been recently imposed and we have managed to get a small reduction in the import duty though we are not satisfied with that. We are trying to get them to lower the duty still further according to the Treaty limits, viz., 5 per cent ad valorem. (Mr. P. V. Krishnayya Choudari: 'Can they tax against the Treaty?') They should not levy any other rate than what they are entitled to levy under the Treaty. Formerly they taxed very much."

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR:—"How long will it take for these proposals to be carried out and what will happen to the people in the meanwhile?"

* The hon. Sir ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL:—"We have taken measures to give some immediate relief; I am now speaking of permanent measures. In the meanwhile, we have tried to form a co-operative marketing association in Tanjore for rice, but this broke down even from the start, as the Registrar's suggestions were not accepted by the local interests. Some time ago, there was a special enquiry made in regard to marketing facilities in the Circars, but no special action was found necessary.

"As regards trade generally, as hon. Members are aware, two experts have been recently brought out from home by the Government of India to study chiefly the collection of statistics relating to production and trade. This will certainly have some effect on our marketing. Co-operative marketing has not been generally successful in this Presidency. Though we have suggested this for several years, so far no successful effort has been made except the Tiruppur cotton market. The association recently started in South Arcot in respect of co-operative marketing of groundnut shows some promise of success. An association has been recently formed in Nellore for the improvement of marketing of Nellore rice, but no recent information has been received as to its activities. Hon. Members are aware that the Commercial Crops Act was passed recently and it is hoped to take action under that Act ere long which we trust will have a beneficial effect on cotton and other commercial crops.

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“ Mr. Langley spoke with approval of the suggestion to grow 4-15 sugarcane in the place of paddy. I may state that this is not a new idea we hear now for the first time. The Agricultural department, I know, has been urging this for very many years. It is by no means a new idea. At the same time, I do not wish to subscribe to the suggestion that it is the conservatism of the ryot which has prevented its general adoption. To begin with, sugarcane could not hitherto be grown except as a ten-months crop. Therefore, assured irrigation for that period is quite essential. Ordinary wet land which would get water for one season is not suitable for growing sugarcane. That accounts for a very large proportion of the wet land in this province. Another matter is that you must have a factory to which you can take the sugarcane close at hand if you are to get the best value out of the cane. It is perfectly true that by the use of the ordinary country mills and the ordinary country method of dealing with the juice, you can get jaggery. But, you do not get the full value of the sugar. To meet the difficulty of having to irrigate the sugarcane crop for the period of ten months which it requires to mature, the Agricultural department has been for some years experimenting and endeavouring to obtain another kind of sugarcane which can be grown on what is called a single crop wet land and they have succeeded in getting a hybrid of cholam and sugarcane which will mature in six months. I think this cane is now being largely adopted; I believe, it has been adopted and grown in Northern India. (Voices: ‘ Bihar.’) We have done a great deal for the introduction of other crops or the improvement of other crops in this Presidency such as cotton and groundnut. Cotton has been improved and a certain variety can be grown with the help of irrigation. I am speaking of the Cambodia cotton. I submit, Sir, that the criticism which Mr. Langley made when he spoke is by no means justified. He implied in his speech that the Government have been asleep for all these years and have done nothing to help the ryot either to grow new crops or to improve the marketing of crops other than paddy. Another matter which is most important is the question of grading which is receiving considerable attention. As regards groundnut, attention has been constantly drawn to the necessity of a good finished product. Our groundnut kernels have a bad name in the world’s markets largely owing to defective methods of preparation. A leaflet has been recently prepared and distributed widely and Chambers of Commerce have been addressed. Reference was made to the importation of Ceylon copra on the West Coast and the damage it is doing to the reputation of the West Coast oil. This Government suggested to the Government of India that a tariff should be imposed on imported copra in the interest of the West Coast purchaser. But, we have just heard that nothing will be done until the report of the Special Officer is received when the matter will receive the consideration of the Government of India.

“ I think, Sir, I have given sufficient details of the measures Government are taking so far as they can for dealing with the situation. I referred just now to the collection of land revenue and it may be of

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interest for me to give some figures as to the extent to which it was necessary to resort to the sale of land to recover the arrears of land revenue in recent years. In fasli 1338, that is to say, before depression began, 18,437 acres were sold for arrears of land revenue. In fasli 1340, the first year of the slump, 47,242 acres were sold; in fasli 1341, the area sold was 27,322 acres; and in fasli 1342, the last fasli, 25,608 acres were sold. (A voice: 'Nothing more to sell, I suppose.') I think those figures are very small considering that the holdings exceed 27 millions of acres.

"Then, one or two suggestions have been made. One was that Government should advance money to the ryots to enable them to develop their lands, for example to make them suitable for growing sugarcane and such other purposes. As a matter of fact, we do now make considerable advances to ryots. I believe the amount advanced under the takkavi system of loans is about 18 lakhs a year. A good deal was said about the introduction of economies in the provincial administration. During the two years from 1930 to this year, the cost of administration has been reduced from 18 crores to about 16 crores. Considerable economies have been already introduced. (Mr. K. Koti Reddi: 'It is not the cost of administration alone; it is the whole expenditure.') Yes. I refer to the whole expenditure. The balances are being reduced and my Friend the hon. the Finance Member will deal with that matter when he comes to deal with the budget. We gave very careful consideration to the suggestions of the Finance Committee and the recommendations which had been made to this Government. This Government in its original proposals thought they were being generous. They went beyond what according to the reports of their officers was really necessary to meet the exigencies of the case. We thought that the Finance Committee proposals went in one respect certainly much too far. For that reason, we could not adopt them; we reduced the percentage suspension of revenue on wet land in recently settled areas from $18\frac{3}{4}$ to $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The original proposal of Government would have cost nearly 52 $\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs in 1343 and 54 $\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs in 1344. The Finance Committee's recommendations would have cost 72 $\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs in the current fasli, and 75 lakhs in the next fasli. The final proposals made by the Government if the amounts suspended are ultimately remitted will involve a loss of 59 $\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs in the current fasli, and if continued a loss of 61 $\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs during the next fasli. The difference in faslis is due to the fact that there are certain increment remissions which have been already granted."

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR:—"May I know the districts in which the original proposals of Government have been revised to their disadvantage as a result of this?"

* The hon. Sir ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL:—"Those districts which have been resettled since 1919."

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR:—"All of them are getting much less than they would get under the original proposals of Government."

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* The hon. Sir ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL:—"On dry lands, yes, but that was the recommendation of the Finance Committee. These proposals are necessarily broadly based, and we could not possibly go into the detailed examination of each man's income. It is quite impossible to do anything of that kind. Whatever we give, we have got to give quickly and therefore the system must be broad and simple. For that reason, we have adopted the present method which has received the approval of the Finance Committee. Some hon. Members have asked why we discriminate between those districts that were settled after 1919 and those settled earlier. As I have already explained, the point is that in those that have been settled since that date the high prices after the war were necessarily taken into consideration whereas there were no such high prices to be considered in the case of those settled before that date, the former have been paying higher rates of assessment for some years, than they would have paid if they had been settled before that date.

"After listening to what transpired in the course of this debate, the Government still feel that they cannot go still further than what they have already decided upon. The percentage which this resolution proposes, namely, 25 per cent, is a much greater concession than the exigencies of the case really require. It is quite possible in particular cases, people may still be put to a considerable difficulty in paying land revenue. As I said, we cannot deal with each individual case. The cost of carrying out the proposal in this resolution will be about a crore and a half, that will be an unnecessarily high standard of concession and we cannot accept this proposal. We feel, Sir, that the proposals already made by the Government, erred, if they erred at all, on the side of generosity. We have given very greatest consideration to the needs of the ryots. We have obtained reports from the Collectors and the Board of Revenue with regard to the position in which the ryots are now placed. We have not only considered whether land revenue was paid last year, we have also had enquiries made on various other points and we have obtained a report also from the Registrar of Co-operative Societies. I am mentioning these facts to show that we have made careful enquiries regarding the economic condition of the ryots and we feel that the proposals that we now make will certainly meet the needs of the situation."

* The hon. Sir HOPETOUN STOKES:—"Sir, I have already said what I have to say in the earlier stage of this debate on the last occasion. I did not intend to take part again because most of what I have to say on these topics will be appropriately dealt with in discussing the budget and I propose to deal with them on that occasion. You know what my particular point of view on this motion is and I do not wish to repeat what I said on the last occasion when this resolution was under discussion. As regards the debate that has been taking place to-day and yesterday, there was one particular financial matter that I would like to touch upon though it is one which I have already touched upon in my former speech, and that is the obsession which many members labour

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under that, because you have a certain amount of accumulated balances you can proceed to surrender revenue and thereby go on meeting new recurring charges. It is quite impossible to be going on drawing on balances for these purposes. Some hon. Members said that this is not a recurring charge. What is it? It began in fasli 1342, continued in 1343 and I have not the slightest doubt that in fasli 1344 there will not be another howl for more remission. You must exercise a certain amount of restraint and commonsense. It is quite impossible for you to go on drawing on your balances for that sort of expenditure. This must be clear to anybody who takes a long view. Now, as a matter of fact, you will find when you come to the discussion of the budget that your balances are being considerably reduced and that it will not last for more than a couple of years. But I do not wish to prejudge the discussion on the budget and I daresay my hon. Friends are anxious to look at it. I wish now merely to emphasize the particular point to be borne in mind when we are discussing a matter of this kind."

* Mr. V. T. ARASU:—"Mr. President, we have had a rather interesting debate on the resolution which was moved by me at the last meeting of the Council recommending to Government that a remission of at least 25 per cent be given to the ryotwari landholders in this Presidency. Sir, from the speeches made in the Council both at the last meeting and at this meeting, it should be evident to the Government that there is not even one hon. Gentleman present in this House who does not feel that the plight of the agriculturists to-day is very bad and that therefore the Government ought to come to their rescue. Perhaps I may say, Sir, that only one hon. Gentleman made bold to say on the floor of this House that he had had occasion to talk to agriculturists and ryots in several parts of the Presidency and that they had told him that they did not want this pittance of 12½ or 18¾ or 25 per cent remission, that they did not care for it at all and that they were anxious to have some permanent relief being given to them. Sir, I refer to my hon. Friend Mr. Basudev who, according to his own admission, is neither an agriculturist nor even one acquainted with agriculture. He described himself as a layman. According to his own admission therefore he has to be classed in the category of carpet-baggers. So, I believe this House would not have taken him seriously when he made that statement.

"I would now refer to the speech made by the hon. the Revenue Member. We were very much disappointed to hear that speech. The hon. the Revenue Member admitted that the Government are fully aware that prices have fallen low generally and that in some cases they are very much lower than the commutation rate which was the basis of the assessment. Having made that statement, the hon. the Revenue Member would still have us believe that the ryot still finds it profitable to carry on the agricultural industry. The hon. the Revenue Member called the statement by an hon. Member of this House that agricultural operations would cease if no relief is given to the agriculturists, as an exaggeration; and, in support of that he produced certain figures. The

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hon. the Revenue Member said that the percentage of collection in the last two or three faslis showed that the ryots are only too willing to meet the demand made on them by the Government and that it was only the agitators who went about saying that the ryots were not in a position to pay. That is, at any rate, the implication of the statement made by the hon. the Revenue Member. But, Sir, I would most respectfully point out to the hon. the Revenue Member that it is wrong to say that the percentage of collections is an indication of the prosperity of the people. Take, for instance, the case of a municipality where the percentage of the tax collected is 100 per cent. Is that in any way an indication of the prosperity of the people inhabiting that locality? To my mind it is only an indication of the fact that the Revenue Officers are efficient and are doing their duties properly. I am prepared to admit that the staff employed by this Government to collect land revenue is very vigilant and uses all the resources at its disposal to compel the ryot to meet in time the demand made on him. Sir, in some cases also I am aware of the fact that some Collectors and Deputy Collectors offer rewards to the village munsifs and village karnams for good and prompt collections; and this reward acts as an incentive to the village officers to use all coercive measures to make the ryot pay his kist in time. It is not, therefore, right to say that, because Government have been in a position during the last one or two faslis to collect their revenues fairly fully and periodically and without very much difficulty, and that during the last fasli also practically the whole of the revenue demand has been collected, the people are prosperous and are in a position to pay the revenue demand.

“ Sir, the hon. the Revenue Member went on to detail at some length the steps which both this Government and the Government of India propose to take in order to improve the position of the agriculturists. The hon. Member said that the Government of India propose to appoint certain marketing officers and that they had already appointed two statistical experts. I think the hon. Member referred to Dr. Robertson and Dr. Bowley who have come down here. Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to enter my emphatic protest against this Government contributing anything to the Central Government for the so-called enquiries which the Government of India propose to institute. What the Government of India and sometimes this Government also do on matters of this kind is this: they import certain officers as experts to advise the Government for temporary periods; but ere long they are made permanent with a large permanent staff attached to them. These things end in additional recurring charges being imposed on the revenues of Government. Therefore I take this opportunity of suggesting to the Government that they should not contribute even a single pie for this purpose. Even assuming that the Government of India propose to take some measures in this matter, and that the same are going to produce beneficial results, it will take some time to materialize in improving the prosperity of the ryots. I ask whether we are going to wait till then? One hon. Member, I believe it was Mr. V. M. Rama-

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swami Mudaliyar, speaking on this motion said that, if relief is going to be given at all, it ought to be given to-day; because it is urgent. Sir, time is the essence here and therefore I would request that whatever relief is proposed to be given it should be given immediately. There is no use saying that the Government are going to provide this facility and that facility at some future time. If we wait till then, I may assure the Government that the ryot would have disappeared and would have been driven from his land.

"The hon. the Revenue Member in support of his statement that it is an exaggeration to say that agricultural operations would cease if immediate relief is not granted said that the purchase of lands year after year from the Government showed an increase and that it proved that people were still anxious to buy lands and to cultivate them. Sir, if only the hon. Member would take the trouble to analyse the figures, he will find that nearly 90 per cent of the lands assigned during the last three or four faslis have gone to the depressed classes and to ex-service men. Therefore it cannot be said that assignments indicate the demand for land. I know that in several districts people who have received assignments of land from Government have not started cultivation at all. I therefore submit that the fact that about 49,000 acres of land have been assigned during fasli 1340 is no indication that agriculture is a paying proposition to-day. The other figure which the hon. Member furnished in support of his argument is that while during fasli 1338 about 48,000 acres of land were sold for arrears of land revenue, during fasli 1340 only about 22,000 acres were thus sold. From these figures the hon. the Revenue Member drew the conclusion that the Government have been able to collect the revenues very easily, in fact more easily than they were able to collect in fasli 1338 or in the earlier faslis. To draw the conclusion from these figures that the people are willing or are in a position to pay the assessment, is wrong. The premises certainly do not warrant such a conclusion.

"The hon. the Revenue Member wound up by saying that if we give this remission we will be setting a very bad precedent and that 'we would be setting up a very high standard of concession.' These are the very words used by the hon. Member. Sir, I am not in a position to understand what the Revenue Member meant when he said that they would be setting up a very high standard of concession. The concession now asked for is neither high nor unreasonable nor is it going to be a recurring charge as he would have us believe. If prices continue to be what they are to-day or if they are going to decline further, no doubt we will be compelled to come forward again and ask for similar concessions during the coming fasli as well. But I hope that there will be no need for a repetition of this demand. At any rate let us hope that the measures the Government are now taking by way of providing marketing facilities, etc., will result in the improvement of the price level of staple commodities."

4-45 P.M. * The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"Order, order, the hon. Member has already exceeded his time-limit and unless he closes his speech soon there will be no time for voting."

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* Mr. V. T. ARASU:—"I would finish in a few moments, Sir. The hon. the Finance Member in his speech on the last occasion, that is, on the 10th November last, stated that the Members seemed to be anxious about the budgetary position of the ryots alone and they did not care about the budgetary position of the Government. Sir, the same charge can be levelled against the hon. the Finance Member as well. He seems to be anxious to collect for Government as much revenue as possible irrespective of the fact whether the ryot is able to pay or not. His position reduces itself to this: 'Whether you are able to make both ends meet or not I don't mind; you must pay and you must enable us to carry on.' If that is the argument of Government, I have nothing to add."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I will read the substantial proposition first: 'This Council recommends to the Government that a remission of 25 per cent in the existing rate of assessment on ryotwari lands in the Presidency be granted during fasli 1343.'

"I will now put the first amendment to the vote of the House. The question is: *Add* at the end of the resolution the words 'and that the remaining assessment on lands be collected in kind and not in money'."

The amendment was lost.

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I will now put the amendment of Mr. Basheer Ahmed to the vote of the House. The question is: After the word 'assessment' and before the words 'on ryotwari' *insert* the words 'inclusive of water-cess and other cesses'."

The amendment was carried.

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I will now put the second amendment of Mr. Basheer Ahmed to the vote of the House. The question is: Between the words 'on' and 'ryotwari' *insert* the word 'all.' After the word 'lands' *insert* the following words 'irrespective of wet or dry'."

The amendment was carried.

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I will now put Mr. Patnaik's amendment to the vote of the House. The question is: *Add* the following at the end, 'provided that in the assessment in the Ghumsur division of the Ganjam district a reduction of 50 per cent be made'."

The amendment was lost.

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I will now put the main resolution as amended, to the vote of the House. The question is: 'This Council recommends to the Government that a remission of 25 per cent in the existing rate of assessment inclusive of water-cess and other cesses on all ryotwari lands irrespective of wet or dry in the Presidency be granted during fasli 1343'."

[31st January 1934]

The motion was declared carried and a poll was demanded and the House divided thus:—

Ayes.

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| 1 Mr. K. R. Venkatarama Ayyar. | 29 Mr. C. R. Parthasarathi Ayyangar. |
| 2 " T. C. Srinivasa Ayyangar. | 30 " K. Koti Reddi. |
| 3 " Sami Venkatachalam Chetti. | 31 Rao Bahadur C. Natesa Mudaliyar. |
| 4 Khan Bahadur Mahmud Schamnad Sahib Bahadur. | 32 Mr. M. B. Rangaswami Reddi. |
| 5 Mr. A. Pl. N. V. Nadimuthu Pillai. | 33 Diwan Bahadur S. Ellappa Chettiyar. |
| 6 " V. T. Arasu. | 34 Mr. R. M. Palat. |
| 7 " A. B. Shetty. | 35 Rao Bahadur T. M. Narayanaswami Pillai. |
| 8 Rao Bahadur P. C. Muthu Chettiyar. | 36 Mr. G. Simhachalam Pantulu. |
| 9 Mr. M. A. Manikkavelu Nayakar. | 37 " T. Narasa Reddi. |
| 10 " Abdul Hameed Khan. | 38 Rao Bahadur A. T. Pannirselvam. |
| 11 " Basheer Ahmed Sayeed. | 39 Mr. G. Ranganatha Mudaliyar. |
| 12 " K. A. Nachiyappa Gounder. | 40 Khan Bahadur Yahya Ali Sahib Bahadur. |
| 13 The Pattagar of Palayakottai. | 41 Mr. M. Devadasan. |
| 14 Mr. K. S. Sivasubrahmanya Ayyar. | 42 " B. P. Sesha Reddi. |
| 15 " P. Peddi Raju. | 43 " G. Sriramulu. |
| 16 " K. Singam Ayyangar. | 44 " P. C. Moses. |
| 17 " Ahmed Miran Sahib. | 45 " W. P. A. Soundara Pandiyan. |
| 18 Diwan Bahadur B. Muniswami Nayudu. | 46 " P. Bayappa Reddi. |
| 19 " C. S. Ratnasabhapati Mudaliyar. | 47 " P. K. Ramachandra Padayachi. |
| 20 Mr. M. S. Sreshta. | 48 " G. Lakshmana Reddi. |
| 21 " P. V. Krishnayya Choudari. | 49 " K. M. Doraiswami Reddi. |
| 22 Sriman M. G. Patnaik Mahasayo. | 50 " J. A. Davis. |
| 23 Mr. C. Indrayya. | 51 " Daniel Thomas. |
| 24 " J. Kuppuswami Choudari. | 52 Swami A. S. Sahajanandam. |
| 25 " Mahboob Ali Baig. | 53 Rao Sahib P. Subrahmanya Chetti. |
| 26 " G. R. Premaya. | 54 " D. V. Narasimhaswami. |
| 27 " Madhusoodhanan Thangal. | 55 Mr. A. Harischandradu. |
| 28 Rao Bahadur R. K. Venugopal Nayudu. | 56 " K. Kesavaramamurti Nayudu. |
| | 57 " S. M. K. Beyabani Sahib. |
| | 58 " A. Ramakrishna Reddi. |
| | 59 " A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar. |

Noes.

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| 1 The hon. Sir Mahomed Usman. | 11 Diwan Bahadur N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar. |
| 2 " Diwan Bahadur Sir M. Krishnan Nayar. | 12 Mr. R. Madanagopal Nayudu. |
| 3 " Sir Archibald Campbell. | 13 " E. Conran Smith. |
| 4 " Sir Hopetoun Stokes. | 14 " T. Sundara Rao Nayudu. |
| 5 " Diwan Bahadur S. Kumaraswami Reddiyar. | 15 Khan Sahib Syed Tajuddin Sahib Bahadur. |
| 6 " Mr. P. T. Rajan. | 16 Rao Bahadur R. Srinivasan. |
| 7 " the Raja of Bobbili. | 17 Mr. V. G. Vasudeva Pillai. |
| 8 Diwan Bahadur V. N. Viswanatha Rao. | 18 Rao Sahib V. Dharmalingam Pillai. |
| 9 Mr. J. A. Thorne. | 19 " D. Krishnamurti. |
| 10 " H. M. Hood. | 20 Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. Patro. |
| | 21 Mr. C. Basu Dev. |

Neutral.

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|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Subadar-Major S. A. Nanjappa Bahadur. | 3 Rao Bahadur G. Jagannadha Raju. |
| 2 Rao Sahib V. I. Muniswami Pillai. | 4 Mrs. K. Alamelumangathayaramma. |

Ayes 59. Noes 21. Neutral 4.

The motion was carried.

31st January 1934]

III.—ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING THE APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMEN OF CERTAIN SELECT COMMITTEES ON BILLS.

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I have to announce that I have appointed Diwan Bahadur B. Muniswami Nayudu as Chairman of the Select Committee on the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act (Amendment) Bill, and Rao Bahadur C. Natesa Mudaliyar as Chairman of the Select Committee on the Madras Maternity Benefit Bill."

The House adjourned till 11 o'clock the next day.

IV.—PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE.

- Pamphlet No. 1 by Upton Sinclair on Birth Control...
- Pamphlet No. 2 by Dr. Sherwood Eddy on Family Limitation.
- Pamphlet No. 3 by G. Bernard Shaw on Birth Control.
- Pamphlet No. 5 by Sir George H. Kimbho on the menace of increasing population.
- Ethics of Birth Control by the Madras Neo Malthusian League.

R. V. KRISHNA AYYAR,
Secretary to the Legislative Council.

வாய்மையே வெல்லும்
TRUTH ALONE TRIUMPHS